THE HUDSON REVIEW

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

R. P. BLACKMUR, the well-known poet and critic, teaches at Princeton University.

REUEL DENNEY is a young poet now living in Chicago.

GEORGE P. ELLIOTT has had a new play recently produced by the St. Mary's College Theatre.

ROBERT FITZGERALD has published two books of poems and collaborated with Dudley Fitts in translations from the Greek.

WILLIAM ALFRED is at work on a verse translation of the *Agamemnon*.

DONAT O'DONNELL, the distinguished Irish critic, is preparing a book on modern Catholic writers.

HOWARD GRIFFIN is living in Taos and working on a novel.

JOSEPH KERMAN, who is music critic for this Review, is on the faculty of the Westminster Choir School.

FRANCIS MASON, JR. is employed by the Voice of America.

HUGH KENNER's book on Ezra Pound, to be published by New Directions, contains a chapter on Ford Madox Ford.

NORTHROP FRYE is currently working on a study of the English epic on a Guggenheim Fellowship.

R. W. B. LEWIS is in Austria this winter as Dean of the Salzburg Seminar in American Studies.

DANIEL AARON'S *Men of Good Hope: A Story of American Progressives* is to be published by the Oxford Press in 1951.

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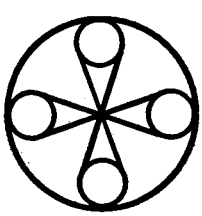

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The Lion and The Honeycomb

R. P. BLACKMUR

THIS PAPER PROPOSES to examine into a certain section of the scholarship and criticism of poetry—the section to which I have been attached for some twenty years and which I feel I can understand—and further proposes a possibility of expansion or growth for it. Far from wishing to repudiate this scholarship and this criticism, my discontent is because I wish them to live their proper life. I believe they have completed a certain stage with honour; I do not wish the honour to become empty, and that means I wish the honour to be renewed for other services in consequence of and in relation to the first. And I fear that if new growth is not undertaken there may be only a false and sterile life. In criticism and scholarship this takes place when method becomes methodology; when a means becomes an end; and my discontent may be a sign that something of that sort is happening now to what is known as the "new criticism", and its scholarship.

Let us go afield to begin with, so we may see, when we come back, where we are located.

A small comparison may be made between what is now happening and a simplified account of what happened in classical society between Plato's *Phaedrus* and Quintilian's *Institutes*. In the *Phaedrus* three chief modes of understanding were at work modifying, supplementing, and criticising one another: the poetic, the dialectical, the rhetorical; and there was no form of knowledge which was not in a state of growth and subject both to speculation and exploration. By poetic is meant: The creative action of the mind which has an eye to truth in the objects it makes. Dialectic has nothing to do with Hegel. By dialectic is meant: The reasonable conversation of the mind which has an eye to truth in ideas. By rhetoric is meant: The art of persuasion, properly, in the service of dialectic or poetic; improperly, in the service of argument on the pleading of a 'cause'; *in extremis* or in abstraction, the art of persuasion uprooted, flourished for its own sake, with its eye on itself. The three together comprise the chief modes for the full play of the mind. So it was with Plato. By Cicero's

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time, the dialectical had been absorbed in the rhetorical; Lucretius does the work of Plato and Aristotle. In another century, in Quintilian, the poetic was absorbed along with the dialectical, and the rhetorical was left solitary and absolute. Society had become fixed and the substance of understanding had become absolute. It followed that the mode or method of the mind called rhetoric became a methodology—a set of rules and formularies—more and more independent in *both* validity *and* form from the material it manipulated. From dialectic, the great balancing mode of the mind, it kept logic, which it believed could prescribe truth. From poetic, the great discovering or originating or as we say creative mode of the mind, it kept the iamb, the hexameter and the figure of speech, which it believed could celebrate truth. It may be observed that the characteristic intellectual monument of the Roman Empire was law. The *Institutes* of Justinian took up the slack in those of Quintilian, and the law in its turn came to use the methodology of rhetoric; it is difficult to know where there is worse repute, in the term legalistic or in the term rhetorical.

No doubt society is immortal no matter what, and would have survived intellectually under the administration of law and rhetoric alone, but Rome never had to try that experiment; for these two methodologies had no sooner absorbed power unto themselves than theology appeared with the terrible urgency of interpreting the will of the living God. To the theoretically fixed world of the Rome of the Empire, which required only routine interpretation, there was added the equally fixed revelation of the Rome of the Church, where every word of scripture required poetic and dialectic and rhetorical interpretation if the means to salvation—that is to say, true survival—were to be understood and followed. It is in the fathers of the Church, particularly in Augustine, that we see the maximum task the full human mind has been able to perform under the dominant modes of law and rhetoric, with poetic appearing only as the passion in the language. What theology would have been like under the dominance of different modes of the mind, is not a question we have the experience to ask; but we do have the experience—it is in the underground of all our intellectual habits—to see that there is a kind of *summa* of criticism and scholarship in the theology of the

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fathers as they used the methodologies of rhetoric and law, and that there is the opposite of a *summa,* whatever the term may be, some congeries of the bottommost, mostly nearly sterile form of the same methodologies, in the rule-books of the rhetoricians, and the closed speculations of the grammarians. Of course we can see this only by a kind of deliberate exaggeration. Theology never escaped the prescriptive *mortmain* of Quintilian and Justinian and never wished to do so; and on the other hand, no rhetorician ever escaped the living burden of language, even if it persisted only as an obstacle to perfection. But with a little exaggeration, and for our own rhetorical purposes, we can assume purity and fullness in either case.

It is an assumption that helps us in looking at the modes of understanding—both of criticism and scholarship—by which we use literature in our own time. It appears to me that what we are very largely up to in practice, and to a considerable extent in theory, is the hardening of the mind into a set of unrelated methodologies without the controlling advantage of a fixed body of knowledge, a fixed faith, or a fixed purpose. That is to say, we are following the tradition in the phase set up under a series of relatively closed societies after the authentic incentives of faith and intellect which brought the phase about have lost their affirmative existence, and when the specific momentum of that phase seems to have run down. I suppose Yeats' image of "The Second Coming" had something of the sort in mind in the first of its two parts.

> *Turning and turning in the widening gyre*
> *The falcon cannot hear the falconer;*
> *Things fall apart: the centre cannot hold;*
> *Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,*
> *The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere*
> *The ceremony of innocence is drowned;*
> *The best lack all conviction, while the worst*
> *Are full of passionate intensity.*

These lines should by now have the familiarity that once belonged to scripture, and, as we know, they require, but without the same authority, the kind of reading our ancestors gave to scripture. Yeats is writing about the dissolution of that authority; but his

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remedy—or his resolution—cannot be ours, or only partly ours, and only in the last instance; for his resolution is prophetic, and is also without authority, a mere piece of rhetorical incantation:

> *Surely some revelation is at hand;*
> *Surely the Second Coming is at hand.*

Yeats turned to prophecy and invoked revelation because he hated the characteristic methodologies of rhetoric and law that belonged to his age, and he was, so to speak, tragically content to envisage the whole enterprise of culture brought to fresh incarnation in the conditions of nightmare and with the birth of some rough beast. It may be that Yeats' image is right and the whole tradition is gone, but it seems to me a better act of will, and more conformable to our daily experience (in which after all we do live most of the time, with so much of what we ever were, surviving) to hold that only a phase of the tradition is gone. Thus it would seem that it was another phase of the old tradition, and not necessarily a new phase, into which we have entered, so that we should wish to keep of the last phase only what has survived it, what was always living; and even there if we could we should, in Isaiah's language, eat the butter and honey of the imagination that we may know to choose the good and refuse the evil. It is not that I wish to go back and not that I wish to separate our adventure from the history of what we have been through; I am quite willing to ask what is the next phase of Christianity, and I am certainly prone to believe that whether Christian or not it will have a deep analogous relation to some phase or aspect of things in the understandable past.

It is indeed by analogy that I believe the mind makes its richest movements, and it is by analogy that I believe the mind makes its deepest use of what it has understood; or at any rate I believe this to be an appropriate way of looking at the labour of the mind in a society, like ours, without a fixed character, and operating under a revelation which turns out to have been imperfectly understood. It is through analogy, if at all, that the falcon can again hear the falconer, that things can come together again, and that again the centre can hold.

The general area of analogy I propose is between ourselves and the Greek society of Plato and Aristotle, between ourselves and

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one of the ancestral forms of the phases of culture which have intervened; and the particular matter for my analogy lies in the vital mutual relationships which then existed among the poetic, the dialectic, and the rhetorical modes of the mind compared to the relatively defective mutual relationships among what corresponds to those modes today. I believe such analogies profitable in considering any mode of thought or action, and that belief is my warrant for applying them to the single field of literary scholarship and criticism, and to the one rather restricted section of that field, our own English and American practice, where I know anything at all; and even here I mean to make a very little stand for a great deal. You see by this I stand almost firmly upon our rhetorical tradition. I assume the truth of my premise—that there actually existed this vital mutual relationship in the modes of the Greek mind; I assume that our minds recognize the goodness of this truth; and I conclude that even in the contumacious field of literary scholarship and criticism our minds will hasten to master, with beautifully articulated skills, this good truth.

Perhaps I should begin by the assertion that scholarship and criticism make, when valid, a single field because there is necessarily a mutual relationship between them, and that either branch of the enterprise is in sorry condition when the relevant form of the other is not present. The relation, and the difference that is in relation, may be expressed grammatically, like so much else in the affairs of the mind. Criticism draws *from* literature that which it signifies or which is useful. Scholarship is *about* literature, describes it, surrounds it, identifies its content, and supplies what is lacking because of the movement of time or the shift in the conventions of the literary mind. Criticism is use; scholarship is the means of use. Criticism accords to the act of imitation or creation. Scholarship accords to the act of description or the refreshment of memory or history. Criticism is within, scholarship without, the work. Criticism deals with the experience of the ideas (or feelings, or what not) *in* the work. Scholarship deals with the ideas (or feelings, or what not), otherwise derived, that may or may not be in the work. Scholarship and criticism edge into each other; in the limbo between is that extraordinarily complicated thing called full appreciation short of judgment; for appreciation with judgment requires the ultimately simple act

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of scholarship and criticism combined in a single intuition—of which there has naturally never been enough for much to reach print, since it is more likely performed in an irrecoverable flash than in lucid prose. The distinctions that could be made along this sequence are not infinite but are empirically indefinite; so let these suffice as a random choice.

The point is, each depends on the other for its own validity, and each modifies the other for its vitality. Yet the characteristic excess of each is when it masquerades as the other without knowing it: I mean, when criticism resorts to description when ignorant of the facts; I mean, when scholarship believes it has made an interpretation by surrounding the work with facts. I mean also, when criticism substitutes personal history for the history of the work, or when scholarship substitutes general history for the history of the work. Everyone should be able to provide himself with examples which are not only glaring but explicable: we can understand how they came about and can expect that they will be repeated, for we see that they depend on the state of scholarship and criticism in a given figure in a given time. There is Dante on Virgil. There are Voltaire and Tolstoi on Shakespeare. There is Dryden translating Chaucer. There is Dr. Johnson on John Donne. There is the Variorum Shakespeare—especially the commentaries on "The Phoenix and the Turtle". And there are the standard commentaries—say a late Scartazzini—on Dante.

There is anything you like when you are looking for excess and very near as much when you are looking for defect; but I should like, with a view towards my analogy, to mention only one pair of characteristic defects: the pair composed by timidity in scholarship and arrogance in criticism, which result from either an under- or an over-estimation of talent, and which have in both cases the effect of narrowing the talent that does exist. How many times have you not seen an extraordinarily able work of scholarship vitiated because the scholar did not dare transform his facts about the work so as to affect our sense of what we get from the work: the very sense of the work at a given moment. A vast amount of able scholarship is a vast understatement made not as a rhetorical device or a dramatic gesture but as a flat and aimless understatement which is the effect of training in caution, reserve, and the sin of over-scrupulosity in every matter not directly war-

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ranted by fact. It is mere facts that make mere scholarship; it is the mere facts about the work that fail to tell us what the work is about.

Similarly, in the corresponding case of criticism, have you not seen an otherwise able work devoted to finding out the use of an author quite vitiated and turned trash because the critic had not availed himself of the living burden of the scholar's facts. He was not able to say truly what his author was about because he had not taken the trouble to find the illuminating facts about his author: the very facts from which the author jumped to the act of creation. A vast amount of criticism is a vast overstatement made precisely as a rhetorical device or a dramatic gesture because of the critic's congeries of beliefs, and partial beliefs, that literature is independent, or autonomous, or pure art, from which he concludes that the critical act is also independent or autonomous if not quite pure and has therefore its own omnicompetent methods. There is a strong taint of original genius about many critics, which is the less surprising if you remember that it is the critics who developed that doctrine.

Another way of expressing these characteristic defects of timidity and arrogance lies in remembering both St. Paul's words: The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life, and Eliot's paradoxical reversal of them: The spirit killeth, the letter giveth life; in which case Eliot was writing in the interests of criticism, St. Paul in those of scholarship. But for my own part, I should be glad if you would think also of my analogy with the mutually related and interinanimated modes of poetic, dialectic, and rhetoric as they play upon each other in the *Phaedrus* of Plato; because this analogy applies to the excesses as well as the defects of scholarship and criticism, and indicates, besides, what the virtues of the complete scholar-critic if ever he came to exist would be. He would not resemble Matthew Arnold nor anything Matthew Arnold hoped to resemble, for none of his virtues would ever tell him that it was his job either to make literature a substitute for religion or a guide for right conduct or a set of magic touchstones. I do not suppose the complete scholar-critic would resemble anything we have yet seen, but I would say that of all men he must be the master-layman of as many modes of human understanding as possible in a single act of the mind. I do not say a master but a

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master-layman—a master of the sense, use, and scope of each mode, both each in itself, and each in its living fragmentary relation to the other modes; I say a master-layman because he is committed, not to the creation of experience, but to the response to experience no matter what the experience is of, and no matter how far short of direct knowledge of the experience his sensibility might come; and I say a master-layman, too, because this ideal monster the complete scholar-critic, as such, cannot permit himself properly the extravagant delight (though he may unawares fall into it) of making his response by means of any single method or mode of the mind exclusively. Whatever his own skills may be he must maintain a lay sense of the pressure of other skills as corrective and supplementary to his own. If he does not know what he ought to have done in a given job of work he will at least have a probable sense of how he abused it.

He will, in short, be a lover of everything that may be done in language conceived as an act of the whole mind; and he will conceive himself, as a lover ought, as only a layman with respect to his beloved, and at best a master-layman. This is not to make claims either for literature or for the scholar or for the critic that any of these have a unique or necessarily superior position in human affairs. I should like to believe that the day of apology or defense or hypostasis of any sort is done, at any rate for the scholar and the critic. I should like to believe that there is clear proof of the need, in our particular society a greater need than ever before, for both scholar and critic to do a particular job of work: the job of putting the audience into a responsive relation with the work of art: to do the job of intermediary.

Critic and scholar are go-betweens and should disappear when the couple are gotten together, when indeed there is no room left for them. That is why there are no statues to critics and scholars. That is why there is nothing deader than dead criticism and scholarship; only the stink remains, sometimes so powerful that it is mistaken for life. Who can tell between the lion and the honeycomb? Criticism, even more than scholarship, was a regrettable necessity in the first place; and what is most regrettable is that some criticism, and some scholarship, remains alive, for good or ill, long after the generation, or even the age, in which it was written. The job of putting the audience into relation to the work

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of art not only has to be done over again, which is to the good and a sign of vitality, but the job is often so difficult that we cannot do it ourselves, there being something lacking in our dominant methods, and we are compelled to rehearse an old job of work done in a different language in a different situation to a different tune.

Such would seem to be our situation, and I propose, again thinking of my analogy from the *Phaedrus*, two models for consideration. There is Coleridge[1] and there is Aristotle, who not only survive but who increment themselves and supplement each other. No one has finished mining Coleridge; no one has yet finished building on Aristotle; and no one has put them together. Coleridge seems the fellow most likely to provide means to do the job we did not find out till just now has to be done. Aristotle is certainly the fellow who when we look into him takes the words out of our mouths. Coleridge began the whole business of the special techniques of modern scholarship and criticism of poetry: all the expansions into the psychology of language and imagination. Aristotle is there to absorb and unite the excesses of these techniques in the terms and under the force of my analogy: the force and illumination of the joint presence of poetic, dialectic, and rhetoric. Aristotle is a sacred book, with its great unwieldy mass of misinterpretation, misunderstanding, and distortion, equalled only by Shakespeare and Dante, surpassed only by the Bible. Coleridge seems to be at least a secondary sort of sacred book, and I can imagine the spreading notion, in this little field, of another alliance of the two testaments. I can imagine, too, if the alliance is made it will be made through the rhetorical tradition of the European mind which reached its true heights of articulate imaginative richness in St. Augustine and Dante: to whom all the modes of the mind were equally parts and instruments of aesthetic experience, and each with a warrant to correct, modify, complete, and incarnate each of the other modes.

To make such an alliance seems to me a proper function of sacred books, the more especially as it might, in the sense that

[1]Coleridge because we are English-reading and because we get through Coleridge a great deal of Europe we have otherwise no name for. But we should think also of what happened on the continent, which took the same German source Coleridge took but came out in different trains of thought and sensibility. Think of Rivière, de Gourmont, Valéry, Du Bos; of Unamuno and Ortega; of Hesse, Dilthey, Curtius. *We* have Coleridge.

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every marriage is a fight for life, restore to each its proper authority, that of the mind seen in direct action. There is an attractive force to mountain peaks; including the *apices mentis* which survive the floods by pure stature. The odd thing is that the force attracts even when we do not climb the peaks and our knowledge of them is something fusty and much garbled. The force is in the words that come into our mouths and in the daily actions of our minds.

I cannot suppose our present batch of critics spend much time reading Aristotle or Coleridge, and what they do read is in musty light. No matter; the *Poetics* and the *Biographia* are there just the same—and when one of them is read directly, and especially when the contact is forced by an urgency of the living mind, the explosion is violent, from one phase of mind into another. I. A. Richards read Coleridge in the early thirties; it was love in ambush; he became passionate, eloquent, memorable, that is, a part of our sensibility as well as of our theory. Intimate contact with Coleridge on the imagination of language brought a new reality to his own language, a new stage of ripeness, based, in his own phrase, on a new principle of "the sane growth of the mind." Well, Richards has since read Plato, another sort of sacred book, but not directly helpful to the task of criticism and scholarship. I wish he might now read directly and with only the impedimenta of his own vision, the *Poetics* of Aristotle. It would be another ambush, another explosion, another stage of ripeness and growth: perhaps a book called *Aristotle on Imitation* to complete the task begun in *Coleridge on Imagination*. Such a work, whoever did it, if he did it in the spirit of the sane growth of the mind, would help re-organize our critical sensibility, as well as add to it, so that it might again, without loss of concreteness, generalize, choose, and judge on fuller aesthetic grounds than it seems able to master at present. I advocate this because I believe that the shape and status of our times provide an opportunity for it: and the kind of opportunity which, looked at with the eyes of my ideal figure, the master-layman, may be construed as necessity. The criticism and scholarship of an age would seem most often to be determined by the minimum necessity seen in the twin problems of how to account for art and how to relate it to its audience, and I shall presently explain why I believe that the figures of Aristotle and

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Coleridge put into living relation constitute the minimum necessity of our time. It will be a layman's explanation.

But I ought of course first to say what I mean by the sacred books of Coleridge and Aristotle. By Coleridge I mean the notions in the set of three words—not any one or any two but the set of all three words: *esemplastic,* which means forming, shaping, at a rhetorical level if you take rhetoric as a creative agent; *coadunative,* which means having to do with the union of dissimilar substances, at a dialectical level if you take dialectic as an aesthetic agent; and *synergical,* which means having to do with working together, cooperative action where the total effect is greater than the sum of the effects taken separately, and all this done, of course, at the level of poetics if you can conceive poetics as applying to all the modes of the mind, including the most intellectual.

These are Coleridge's words, and I believe my definitions are conformable to the way Coleridge used his mind, and all the more so, rather than less, because I have brought into the definition my analogy about rhetoric, dialectic, and poetic. Nor would it hurt if the terms of my analogy were differently assigned; it would not hurt, it would be another help in understanding how deep the mutual relationship is of the modes of the mind in action. In Coleridge as he wrote these terms apply to the behaviour of words and are the attributes of imagination in words; and for him they provided those occasions for poetry of "more than usual emotion with more than usual order." For us they provide a free heuristic psychology of poetry, a rich partial means for finding out what is in the words of poetry, and an equally rich partial means of putting the maximum meaning into the words we use ourselves.

By Aristotle, I mean the notions that still live in the following set of six terms, especially when they are returned to their Greek forms: *Praxis,* or action; *Mimesis,* or the imitation of action; *Mythos,* or plot, which is the soul of the work; *Ethos,* or the operation of character; *Pathos,* or the tragic incident through which action is felt; *Katharsis,* or the purging, cleansing, purifying of the *mythos* subject to *mimesis.* These are the six terms I would chiefly keep from Aristotle, but of course to use them I should also need the aid of the five more nearly formal terms, three for the action of the plot, and two addressed to the persons through whom the plot acts. The formal terms about the plot

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are *Desis,* or complication; *Crisis,* or turning[2]; and *Lysis* or unravelling. The formal terms about the persons are *Peripeteia,* or the reversal of roles or situation; and *Anagnorisis,* or shock of recognition. Together, the two sets of terms apply not to the behaviour of words like Coleridge's terms, but to the behaviour of the things indicated by the words. They fasten attention upon that momentum of life which the histrionic sensibility may grasp by the mimesis of action. Mimesis, I take it, is the mind's action, and there is no question that, richly understood, any single full mimesis operates in deep, but widely variable, relation to poetics, dialectic, and rhetoric. For myself, I see a sequence or relation whereby the mimetic act is the incarnation into actuality of what we can grasp of reality; which is the reason why we pay enormous salaries and devotion in Hollywood and why in my boyhood Bernhardt was the Divine Sarah, and which is also a good part of the reason for the lasting power—the greatness—of great literature. More technically, we seem to believe that the soul as the form of forms has a formative or creative power in the relation of mimesis which we call *Poiesis* or poem-making; and it is when we remind ourselves of that, we know what Coleridge is really for: to find out the relation between the behavior of the words in the poem and the behaviour of the things indicated by the words and imitated through them.

Under the influence of the Coleridgean criticism—or perhaps I should say "the new criticism"—a scholar, Robert Goheen, has written a book, I trust soon to be published, on the images in the *Antigone,* which enquires precisely into the relation between these two streams of behaviour; a work of scholarship which passes into criticism as it took its immediate incentive from criticism; and a work which, though novel and opening up a new field for the scholar-critic, is nevertheless characteristic of our time. Mr. Goheen has made without intending it a practical gesture towards making an alliance between Coleridge and Aristotle, and if he has done so under the aegis of the "new criticism", that is all the better to my purpose, for it is the extension, complementation, and purification of the "new criticism" that I want now to deal with. I want to protect its methods from its methodologies.

[2]This needs a little expansion. Turning is a kind of decision. *Crisis* is the intellectual act, *and* its occasion, of decision.

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What is called the "new criticism"—now well enough established to have a public odor of disrepute about it—is, I should expect, a set of emphases in criticism and scholarship which have been objectively determined, like other sets of emphases in other times, by the literature, by the presumed reader, by the general state of culture and knowledge, and by the immediate history and tradition of critical and scholarly ideas and practice: all working unequally and more or less incongruously together. Let us look at some of these determinants, and then at the criticism.

The literature in this case is poetry, called variously the School of Donne, the School of Hopkins, Yeats, Eliot, Pound, Stevens, and Auden, the new Metaphysical School, and so on. The important thing is that it is a learned poetry, roughly the first in English since the seventeenth century, and with as many direct continental roots as old English roots. There have been learned poetries before. I suspect Chaucer was learned. There is Dante; there is Virgil; probably Sophocles; and of course the Indians and the Japanese. And I suspect, with any of these, that we do not know to what extent their learning is not ours. A learned poetry is new only to us. But this poetry is not only learned; it depends a great deal upon the conventions of language as image, conceit, metaphor—the whole complex of the connotative uses of language; it depends characteristically upon what has happened since the Renaissance to the old rhetorical tradition, and contains the poetic and dialectic modes in relatively subordinated and even hidden positions. I think in this poetry we have been witnessing a strange, less than conscious rebirth of the old rhetoric; it is a poetry which depends on the reality of words to carry all other reality. What kind of criticism would you expect of such a poetry?

The presumed reader in this great age of mass literacy—this even greater age of the division of the mind—turns out to be illiterate with respect to this poetry, which is natural enough, for it takes time to get used to any new poetry, and also turns out to be illiterate with respect to almost all poetry, which seems unnatural, and which requires great additional burdens in the job of education from both criticism and scholarship. At any rate we see that the difficulty of the reader with Eliot and Yeats only exaggerates the difficulty with all poetry. What kind of criticism and scholarship would you expect for such a reader?

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The general state of culture and knowledge is of course reflected in the characteristic poetry and the presumed reader. Culture has become fragmentary, belief has become beliefs, as interests have become specialized and communities massive. The enormous heightening of self-consciousness is accompanied by the diminution and mutilation of available general consciousness. As our knowledge and understanding of the classics increase, both their study and use go out of fashion. We have the interesting relationship that as we intensify individuation the *society* of individuals tends to disappear; for a sociology is not a society. What we have, with respect to the older forms of our culture, is the disappearance of the man who by his education, his tradition, and his own responsive life, was the layman to all the forms of his society. The mind no longer feels omniform or that it knows its own interests. We have a society of priests or experts who are strangely alien to the great mass movements which they presumably express or control. —What would you expect the criticism to be which had the burden of relating Eliot and Yeats through our presumed reader to such a state of knowledge and culture?

Clearly with such a burden imposed upon it you would like to have expected a coherent, fully implicated, and fully committed body of criticism in sound relation to a similar body of scholarship: together something good for the sane growth of the mind: together something with the authority of action not assertion. But you ought not to have expected such a thing from the history of criticism.

Very little since Aristotle and until Coleridge has been demanded of criticism, and not much more of literary scholarship. We are of recent need. The immediate history and tradition of critical ideas are unfortunately those of pure art—art for art's sake—the Arnoldian claim that poetry might substitute for religion or philosophy, along with the tremendous infusion into our general habits of mind of new ways of finding trouble, uncertainty, insecurity, ambiguity, irrationality through the techniques of psychology, anthropology, semantics, and physiology. None of these trains of attitude and idea help much to create, either in poetry or its criticism, a decent relation to society. They do help to envisage, in a phrase of Eliot's, the incredible public life and the intolerable private life of our time. They make a pattern of incongruity, incompatability, and disrelation. The pattern was

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inevitable when, as was the case, the mind went through art for art's sake to find rhetoric and found rhetoric as a neutral, though troubled, methodology.

I do not know what sort of relation there is between these elements just laid down (and I am sure there are other elements not mentioned) and the "new criticism", but I am certain there is some sort of generic relation. When I think of these elements I seem to understand how the "new criticism" came about. We developed a prodigious conscious skill in the psychology of poetic language (that is, rhetoric, as modified by Coleridge) and entered thereby into the private worlds of the poets to find there private images of the great world not otherwise accessible to the reader and perhaps not otherwise creatable by the poet. So attractive as well as necessary were the techniques of this skill in language that they led to excess analysis, excess simplification, and excess application, which is the normal pathology of a skill become a method and a method become a methodology. What was required to be exemplary turned out to be omnivorous daily practice —perhaps in the creation of poetry as well as its criticism; and the single practice was believed somehow to stand for all other pertinent practices. This is unity or wholeness by exclusion. The point is, that these conscious skills made an adequate, though never complete, criticism of certain poetry, some of it contemporary where the adequacy was high, some of it two centuries old where the adequacy was low; that these skills also illuminated corresponding aspects of all poetry without being an adequate criticism of it and without being a scholarship at all; and that, finally, the process of developing these skills educated into a special literacy a fairly large class of presumed readers. There was never a coherent critical position, certainly never a uniform practice; there was rather the development of habitual skills of the analysis of verbal texts made necessary by the cultural situation and some of the poetry written from it. These skills, along with certain claims that the poetry these skills analyzed was knowledge or experience, perhaps masqueraded as a position which relieved the mind of the need for any other mode of knowledge. The risk then is that the rote of response replaces the skill. Nobody ought to throw a skill away, but nobody seeing the excesses and degenerations of a skill ought to depend so much on it as when it was new and had élan.

The one thing the "new critics" shared was skill in analysis

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at a highly conscious level of the behaviour of the words in poetry; that is, most of them have been engaged in making a rhetoric, but at the psychological rather than the grammatical level of language, and they have made their rhetorics dominate, or stand for, most other modes of the mind. What I would want is to keep the rhetoric but to get rid of its dominance and to put it into living and variable relation to other modes of the mind; I should like to add poetic and dialectic; I should like to build Aristotle on to Coleridge or develop Coleridge out of Aristotle; and I believe that by the pressure of a major force (I take the phrase from Dante, not from Hitler, not from the mechanists or Marxists) something of the sort is happening. Since I cannot say what this major force is, except that it has something to do with the reality that so presses upon us that we need all our modes of understanding, all our modes of mimesis and synergy to cope with it, let me illustrate.

John Crowe Ransom has these late years been extending the theory of his criticism beyond the rhetorical scope of tenor and vehicle and structure and texture into epistemology and ontology, that is to say into dialectic, and the last essay of his I have read was on Aristotle and moved into poetic. But the practice of his criticism is still under the rhetoric of tenor and vehicle and texture; the skill of his theory has not run down into the skill of his hands, and he has some scruples about permitting it to do so. His essay on Milton's *Lycidas* was called "A Poem Nearly Anonymous", and so far as he dealt with *Lycidas* as an exercise in his kind of rhetoric it was an excellent essay; but I do not believe it touched very much the matters in the poem which Milton's rhetoric dealt with and composed and which were not nearly so much dominated by it as Mr. Ransom's rhetoric would have you think: I mean the theology and politics and personal experience which are the intellectual and poetic subject of the poem: I mean precisely what Mr. Ransom's theoretic occupations now lead him to. There is a sense of the complementary just at hand and as if it had always been there but not noticed in the particular instance until too late.

Analogously, in the essays of Cleanth Brooks there is something not done crying out to be done, which is perhaps to be understood as somehow present in his best pieces, those on Yeats and Eliot.

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By and large, what Mr. Brooks has made is a rhetoric of Irony and Paradox, with sub-types of Ambiguity, Attitude, Tone, and Belief. How rhetorical his theory is may be seen in his objections to paraphrase: he will have nothing of any plain account of the material translated into the rhetoric of the poetry; but he nevertheless makes sensitive rhetorical paraphrases of various poems. The trouble is that his Rhetoric of Irony and Paradox when applied to Donne cannot deal with the intellectual experience which for Donne was the *other* part of the material of the poem. Where with Eliot and Yeats, men of middle age or better can take for granted the *other* part and get along tolerably well with Mr. Brook's rhetoric, it is difficult to do so with Donne and impossible with Milton or Shakespeare. Not long ago Ronald Crane, the Chicago Aristotelian, took Mr. Brooks to task on these matters,[3] approaching the need for dialectic through the need for scholarship. The two objections I have to Mr. Crane are that he did not give enough credit to the positive illuminations, which need only their correctives and supplements, of Mr. Brooks, and that he did not himself push on to the poetics needed to correct and supplement both himself and Mr. Brooks.

If we look at the two volumes of William Empson and some of his recent essays, it turns out that he, too, has stuffed all his dialectic and most of his poetics into a Rhetoric of Ambiguity and Pastoral. While the results are exciting, they are one-sided and even deformed if taken, as Mr. Empson takes them, as a means of reading conformable to the poet's own intention or to the reading of readers differently trained. All the power of Mr. Empson's mind depends on the exclusiveness with which he transforms his rhetorical method into a total methodology. As Mr. Brooks had Mr. Crane, Mr. Empson has had a corrective applied by Miss Rosemond Tuve with regard to his interpretation of George Herbert's "The Sacrifice"; which is a very exciting poem in Mr. Empson's reading, but all on the level of the psychology of language, all on what the words do to the material and very nearly nothing on what the material does to the words through other than verbal modes of the mind. In Miss Tuve's meaning the specific and demonstrable mode of Christian allegory, both as a de-

[3]R. S. Crane: "Cleanth Brooks; Or, the Bankruptcy of Critical Monism." *Modern Philology*, XLV, No. 4, May 1948, pp. 226-245.

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vice of poetics and as a means of representing Christian thought aesthetically, is brought back into the poem, thus providing it with several levels of poetic experience of which Mr. Empson was ignorant. I rather suspect that Mr. Empson's answer to Miss Tuve would be that the modes of the mind she finds in Herbert no longer exist; if so he would be right, but only from the point of view of his methodology, which is what needs correction: precisely so that more of the poem might come into existence.

Mr. Ransom, Mr. Empson, and Mr. Brooks may object to being called rhetoricians; they have not conspicuously used the term of themselves; but Kenneth Burke must have found it his first cradle-word, and I think he would rather be called Rhetor, as honorific and as description, than anything else. I suspect that like Cicero in *De Finibus*[4] he regards poetry, philosophy, and religion as matters subordinate to rhetoric in the beginning and in the end to be transformed into rhetoric. His great work is interesting (I am still pursuing my analogy) in the titles of the three volumes. The first was called *A Grammar of Motives,* the second is called *The Rhetoric of Motives,* and for the third there is no certain title (as the book is not written) but he has twice referred to it as The Symbolic. If we remember that one of Mr. Burke's favorite key devices is contained in the remark that language is either *symbolic* action or symbolic *action,* I think we may hazard it that rhetoric will be doing the work in the symbolic. In Mr. Burke rhetoric always does all the work, and in order to do so it has to acquire two specific characters. It has to become very abstract—so abstract that Kant's categories become immediate sensations; and with its abstractness it also has to become neutral. The feeling of spate, of copiousness, you get in Burke is because of this abstract neutrality; he has no need to stop and there is nothing to arrest him: there are no obstacles he cannot transform into abstract or reduce to neutral terms in his rhetoric. He is a very superior example indeed of the mind in which the articulate organization has absorbed the material organized. The rhetoric is so good for any purpose that it very nearly engorges purpose. The methodol-

[4]This may be a little rough on Cicero. But in *De Finibus* (V, 3) Cicero says in praise of the Old Academy: "They have produced orators, generals and statesmen. To come to the less distinguished professions, this factory of experts in all the sciences has turned out mathematicians, poets, musicians, and physicians." (Loeb translation.) I am indebted to Erich Auerbach for this quotation.

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ogy is a wonderful machine that creates its own image out of everything fed into it: nobody means what he says but only the contribution of what he says to the methodology.

Now I would suppose that Mr. Burke's rhetoric is a true rhetoric despite its abstractness and neutrality. I would suppose that his rhetoric is a heightened, elaborated, exemplary form of a stage every mind must pass through in taking up mutual relations with dialetic and poetic (or psychology and philosophy), but I am certain that this rhetoric is no place to stay. Nor will it help me to consider that this rhetoric is an act of unification and that the other modes of the mind are to be found organized into it; indeed that is my objection, for, unified, bound together, the modes of the mind lose both their own distinction and the distinct aspects of things they were intended to handle; and furthermore, so closely organized, there is no room for the mind to contain anything besides itself. I would not have Mr. Burke other than he is; he is an exemplary monument; but I would use him, and I hope I do use him, quite other than he is.

Here, of course, I use him somewhat unfairly, as the last step in my effort to show the ultimately rhetorical character of the processes of the "new criticism". It is unfair because Mr. Burke is only a literary critic in unguarded moments, when rhetoric nods. As a regular thing Mr. Burke does not give an account of literature; he substitutes his account for the literature, with a general air that the account does well what the literature did badly and that the only sound use of literature is to furnish rhetoric with one of its incentives. I draw the inference that the characteristic risk of the "new criticism" is that its special skills of analysis may become an omnicompetent methodology and that the risk is underlined by the rhetorical nature of the skills. To put it another way, it is a natural sequence to move from art for art's sake to criticism for criticism's sake. But I do not wish to be misunderstood; I do not suppose there is one of the "new critics" who would not assent to these strictures, and I also suppose that these strictures may with point be applied to myself.

I only proceed from common ground, where "Behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion;" and I hope we proceed towards that other common ground where we understand how from strength comes forth sweetness.

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But that is rhetoric and is meant to be my apology for dealing with my colleagues of twenty years for a present purpose of my own, which has to do with the next twenty years. If, in summary, the "new criticism" was a high success in partial criticism, it would only improve the success if it were associated with a more nearly complete criticism. Parallel to this statement, it may be observed that in history criticism has been almost entirely of poetry and poetic drama. It would seem that until our own stage of culture was reached only poetry required criticism. Now all forms of literature require criticism and scholarship, each in its kind, and almost each in its example; it is part of the conditions of life. When I think of the criticism of poetry it sometimes seems to me that it is poetry's fault that we live in a rhetoric-sodden world. But there may then be an advantage in realizing that much of the old work of poetry is now done, and has been these three hundred and fifty years, in prose; all of which now requires criticism. It may be that this criticism will put rhetoric back into relation with dialectic and poetic, not losing any of the new skills of rhetoric but rather finding further skills in the other modes of the mind to go with them. We would then be back in the *Phaedrus,* or beyond that:

> *Homer is my example and his unchristened heart.*
> *The lion and the honeycomb, what has Scripture said?*

Among other things, Scripture says that in literature we are dealing with matters for which we do not have competent discursive techniques, although we habitually manipulate our responses to them by our existing discursive techniques. We do, however, have deep unconscious skills in literature which we may get at and learn initial aspects of by discursive means, though we may not apply them as absolute rules: e.g. metrics and the grammar of the rhetoricians may help us get at the deep skills of the lion and the honeycomb, of the little book which is sweet as honey in the mouth but bitter in the belly, just as the angel in Revelation said. Literature is one of our skills of notation of the incarnation of the real into the actual; and we have made many successive and sometimes recurrent agreements or conventions about the means of notation, but we have never been able to articulate very much of our deeper, far-reaching agreements about the skills them-

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selves, much less about the sources of the skills. We "have eaten Smooth creatures still living," as Eliot says. We have within us taste and skill. Part of the skill lies in what Coleridge calls the reality of words, and part lies in the plot which Aristotle calls the soul of the work or mimesis. These house the skills of the aesthetic sensibility. Taste, as we know, is variable and educable and transformable; it also seems to me a matter of faith, of faith testing life. Beyond skill and taste lie such matters as rhythm and play and gesture. And beyond that is our capacity to bring or to refuse to bring with us our good will, our own knowledge, our own creativity, our own empathetic power of imagination. That is why our final judgment—with all our scholarship and criticism —depends on the state of culture at a given time; just as what makes a work of art conformable to different cultures at different times is the unity of the reality under all cultures at all times.

Here is Aristotle on Coleridge: the form of forms creating in actual words some of the reality of the language under the words. I think this idea is represented by the development through fifteen years in two sentences of T. S. Eliot. The first said we can only tell whether a work is literature by literary means but can only tell whether it is great literature by extra-literary means. Here is the second: "To judge a work of art by artistic or by religious standards, to judge a religion by religious or artistic standards should come in the end to the same thing: though it is an end at which no individual can arrive."

What happens if you take this view is that the modes of the mind work together. The Coleridge demands the Aristotle and the Aristotle builds up and through the Coleridge. At this point the critic can get himself out of the way. He will know, with Montaigne, that "a beautiful matter will always be in place, wherever it is sown;" and by other skills he will know, in the language of the Chorus of Women of Canterbury, that he has "lain in the soil and criticized the worm." For it is at this point that the mind acknowledges that the force behind art exists outside art, but also that the work of art itself almost gets outside art to make a shape —a form of the forms—of our total recognition of the force that moves us.

[*This essay was originally presented as a MacGregor Room (now Peters Rushton) Seminar, University of Virginia, 3 March, 1950.*]

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Log of a Cruise

REUEL DENNEY

THE rememberer says:
When you speak of cruises, listen.
There are so many ways by water. That shell morning,
Smelling of coffee, in City Island October,
We turned a yawl to the sound. Our motor
Smelled to us first of tar; then leaf smoke
Sidled across from forts on points and houses.
That day is like a lens, and there, inside it,
One negro, in a flat boat, in a straw hat scissored
With stars and moons for airholes, anchored fishing,
Giving his crown's reflection to the wave,
Stays well in focus. He was an old Long Island
Wearing a lilac shirt, his eel-soft hands
Handling the line, his forehead the color of clapboard
Warmed by a Quogue spring morning.
We said: suspended study man, goodbye.

THE only meaning of mind is that such a meeting
Is picked and thrown back in junk by time,
Then picked again; then picked and held.
You have seen in Forty Seventh Street, diamond lane,
The genial escaper from Amsterdam
Lift and lay down the gem, come back again,
Come back again to one on the velvet lawn.
So mind goes back, with many reasons, to one.
But hurry tide. We took you downward
Past the city, new, as if night's morning,
New York looking as if the bricklayer only left it.
So it stands. Unreflected. Without comparison,
Over the water it worlds on. That cool day,
We bundled against a wind that chafed the poplar
In Brownsville rows. Paint-chipped, charmed,
We wandered down the rush of the large river
Feeling the currents in the water under
With scalloped music playing the soundbox hull;
And the city roaring silent, out of sound.

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ALWAYS when you travel you always pay the scene
Its other scene, the mind it was waiting for,
Then take the eye away. The bay then
Was all a playground where we got wind for sailing.
The city drew away. Each train went back
Whispering into its tunnel for the north.
The cigar store man grew small in every building.
We heard the turnstile clicking many names
Into the afternoon; and where we were
The avenues of water, glass and cloud,
Moved like displays no window ever fames.

THE rememberer says:
A boat moves on the water. It makes you think of
Planks in puddles and steamers in oceans,
A childhood shingle and an old man's steam-yacht
And all the catalog: the Alden sloop that lies
In Marblehead calm, lazy as light and weed,
A movie girl's superb machine at Balboa
Lifting its Egyptian sail on spars aluminum,
And in the mid-west, the boats in windows
Sailing at night, the power cruisers in stores.
Somewhere the boat is always moving, even in traffic,
Even out of the water, it sails the highway,
Proceeding down to its appointed wave.
Or so we felt then, lolling in one boat chosen,
One way, one month, one swayed vacation;
Moon, while we slept, with every wave that moved,
Pointed again and again to our white lantern.

FAR and later, far and later, floating,
We think of Chesapeake Bay, by smoke enchanted
Into a surface where a wind's white wrist
Went polishing the mirror of the day.
Here there were more leaves, burning on beaches,
And little forelands with roots that reached the water,
Pencilled piers, and old white houses,
A large October lying at salt stream ease.
Big oysters, succulent stones that are hollow,
Holding delicious portions, came in baskets

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Over the swells before us. Floating at sky edge,
Those pyramids of sail on wide-beam schooners
Shifted with unknown airs, pale triangles
Over invisible hulls too far to see there.
The wind raced on the inland sea that day
Light blue and terra cotta, touched and erased where
The reaches lay in clear Northwest persuasion.
Your heart says every cruise has inland water,
Surf with its teeth drawn; so this bay was;
The shoals were green on the Virginia shore.

OUR pin, our point, our infinitesimal went moving
Beyond its limit for the longest looker
In town after town. Dock after dock went back
Until we came to the first land loved by the sand
Where the palmetto breaks its old grey cardboard
Out of the heat that sharpens itself on spines,
Where even dockside laziness is geared down
With another wheel of slowness. Beaufort
Had gasoline, beer, forts buried in dunes,
It had houses built for the sea-air to go through,
With windows wide both in the back and front.
There, afternoons glide in across the floors
And constantly move the cloths in inner rooms.
Even when no one is there, the curtains move;
The writing on the desk is stirred on paper.
Beaufort is no great place, but these old houses
Suggest the gesture to live in. Could we
Have the window open? Could the wind too live here?
Could we go away and leave the air to work
Alive in linen, breathing in empty chairs?
Such rooms would be good to come back to,
Served by an air like chamois constant on silver.

IN the Sea Islands, living is cheap
Except where it is expensive. I remember
The rich man's fort, planned out of live-oak longing,
Picture-houses of little Spanish towns
Standing on lawns like paint. In the garage,

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On the off-season island, a ruby Rolls
Buzzed in the heat with a wasp in its middle.
These towns are known by their bottled spring water,
Empty Saratogas standing by pipes and stations,
And grass manured by the butts of good cigars.

SUCH peace for far-away owners is marvellous to consider,
Thinking of Woodward Avenue in Detroit,
Where dreams like this seem somewhat out of date,
Music from pianolas or button shoes.
We all, of course, have passed such islands,
Even tied up there, walked in the evening
In an uncostly leisure, looking and smoking;
Gratuitous graces of an unpeopled scene!
These should be good retreats for inventors, and for
Wealthy translators. I think I hear the trap-shots
Spectral over rough grass. Here is a small pig
Wandering in his little jungle, reminding us
Of the refugee Frenchman, once transplanted here,
Who kept a snouter on a string to dig him truffles,
Giving the rooter one out of every ten.
Time, I have bargained for such a dividend.

NOTES of a tinted cruise, the rememberer says,
Make pictures in which a viewpoint makes its room
With room space made for it. The memorandum
Is that I sailed and sauntered many days,
Days away from the office and the mooring,
Tasting the ripple of forgotten pain, and building
Suggestions in the sense to ways and means.
These idylls were whenever they were, and now;
When could they fade, or ever fail to sing?

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Children of Ruth

GEORGE P. ELLIOTT

RUTH ADAMS, a vigorous woman of 55, had lived all her life in the same house and intended to be living in it when she died. The house suited her tastes and needs to perfection; it was spacious and well-proportioned, it had no needless decorations yet it served the requirements of comfort, it was entirely respectable yet admired by persons of every taste. It was, in fact, a part of herself. When she tried to imagine herself without her house, she did not know who she would be; it was her scholar's books and her painter's brush and her farmer's soil. Her attachment to it was so strong that she refused to go as delegate to out of town conventions, no matter how worthy the cause at hand; in defense of her refusal, strange in one who took so many good causes to her heart, she argued that in order to effect one's ends at a convention one must use every device of unscrupulous politics, compromising, if only in that corrupt practice, one's most cherished beliefs. This is true; however, it is doubtful if she would have objected so strenuously if she had not been reluctant to leave her house. It is notable that, whenever a convention of the sort that interested her was held in San Francisco or Oakland, she made her influence felt in ways that can only be called political. Chief among these ways of hers, though she was not conscious of duplicity or of putting on pressure when she did it, was her inviting key delegates to visit her, or even to stay at her house, during the convention. The commodious grace of the house and her assurance in it exercised an influence which only most insensitive or hostile delegates could resist.

Twice in her life Ruth had been tempted to leave her house, each time because of the love of a man. The first occasion had been when she had barely emerged from girlishness and had not yet emerged from her girlish love of a college companion, Luke Adams. It was during the first World War; they felt hurried, they married; Ruth had produced a daughter and was pregnant with a son when Luke enlisted and was shipped overseas. Luke contracted tuberculosis in the trenches; at the war's end he was

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dying in a hospital in France, and it was then that Ruth was tempted to leave her home for a long voyage overseas. But the doctors assured her the trip could not save him; and since both the babies were sick with flu at the time, she stayed home where she belonged and let Luke die by himself. She grieved over his loss and reproached herself for not having gone to him; but the reproaches had so little substance that she eventually forgot them, and the loss while great enough at the time gradually came to seem less and less devastating to her. Luke by inclination and temperament had been destined to a prominent position in the YMCA; while the YMCA was a virtuous organization in Ruth's view, still as the years went by her taste inclined more and more towards a headier sort of man than it was likely to produce.

The other temptation had been in 1930 when she had fallen in love for the second time. It was with a major in the Army, a large, indocile, irresponsible, domineering man named Frederick Kotowski. She disapproved of his profession, his philosophy and his effect upon herself; yet when he demanded that she marry him and go off to China where he was being stationed, she almost went. In fact she put her house up for sale and began packing her dishes. She was with child at the time and her friends kept telling her how right she was to marry Kotowski; but when at the last she decided not to go with him but to stay in her home and bear a child out of wedlock, her friends, such as did not fall off, began applying the epithet courageous to her.

The epithet stuck: when a few years later she had alone and unaided dug up the evidence to convict three city officials of embezzlement, the local newspapers too applied it to her; and her defense of Japanese-Americans at the beginning of the second World War won for her the final laurel of fugitive fame: favorable epithets in *Time* magazine ("grey-haired, brave Ruth Adams . . ."). So she had preferred her snug house to the danger and mystery which loving Kotowski meant; she wrote him after the child was born and never heard from him again. In 1942 the child, Erasmus Oliver Adams, received notice that his father had been killed in the Philippines and that he was the beneficiary of a $10,000 life insurance policy. She put the money aside for the time when he would need it, spent half a day wondering why she had ever loved a man like Kotowski, and turned back then to

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helping the Japanese-Americans. For their sake she thought of flying to Washington, where she might put the pressure on some senators and bureaucrats; but she did not trust herself so far afield, and she sighed with relief when she was told she could not get priority to travel on the planes. And now she was as active as ever, except that she had to rest for a couple of hours every afternoon; as active but not quite as self-assured, for the Japanese-American battle, which she had of course lost, had made her realize for the first time that the collective fate of the people of Oakland was scarcely at all in their own hands: during the 1940's a great many gears were stripped in that fine Machine of Progress, though not all of them.

The house she lived in had been built by her father shortly before she was born. Her father, Orestes Stull, had been an advanced architect of the time and had made a great deal of money from the designing of private houses for the well-to-do of Berkeley and Oakland. He refused to design public buildings in a style acceptable to city officials of those gingerbread decades; and despite his vogue among the expanding class to which he catered, he was never left completely free in his designing of houses. Always the husband insisted upon a bay window, or the wife declared she would die without a rear staircase, or they both agreed that the fireplace should be in a wasted corner. Throughout the 80's his fame and fortune grew, and by the early 90's he had the money to build for himself the house at 17 Denver Place, the home which he had been perfecting piecemeal in the houses of others.

It was built of redwood—an ancient, rather dark, straight-grained wood—and there was no part of it which was not useful, functional. Still, though every beam had its use, some of them might have been larger than necessary because to him they looked better large; some of them might have been placed at a graceful angle and not at the angle of greatest efficiency; they had an architect's rather than an engineer's usefulness. The living room was spacious and low of ceiling for those times; to keep it from being gloomy, Stull had put casement windows along two walls; one side yielded a view of lawn and trees and the other a small prospect of the Bay. It was neither a formal nor an intimate room but either as one willed, and it was always beautiful. One

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ate in the kitchen, which was huge and airy. The kitchen was redwood too, unpainted; as coolers and gas ranges and refrigerators and mixmasters kept being invented, Stull and Ruth after him had them incorporated into the paneled walls. One had the impression of cupboard doors clean yet darkened by the years of cooking in that comfortable room and bright pottery on open shelves and large workboards; and none of that surgery feeling, glistening and well-arranged, which is a kind of ideal nowadays: shining implements and white purring machines and housewife in white smock and clocks and a deadline for dinner, all for lamb chops and peas. In the Stull kitchen guests frequently sat till midnight talking over coffee; the chairs were kitchen chairs and a great deal better for thinking in than right-angle dining-room chairs or an over-stuffed davenport. In every bedroom there was a copy of a painting on the wall, a Turner countryside, a Cézanne still life, some Audubon birds. The study was lined with books, the cellar was stocked with canned fruit and a barrel of apples and a few cases of wine, the attic was full of odds and ends of furniture and boxes full of old curtains or, later, of Stull's manuscripts and drawings. Ruth had a great many photographs on the walls of her room of each member of her family, of her friends, of the Parthenon and ruins of Rome and Mont St. Michel; she kept them all and added to them as the years went by; she seldom really looked at them but she would have been diminished by their absence. From the outside the house was dignified but unostentatious; indeed to the owners of the mongrel imitations which surrounded it, it appeared plain. To them its comfort without their antiseptic luxuries was a sort of perversity, its flagrant honesty a temptation and a threat. Neither Stull nor Ruth nor Ruth's three children ever made friends with their neighbors.

Ruth's friends were scattered throughout the Bay Area; and, while she had no secret requirement that they should live in houses like her own, decent and dignified, yet most of them, as it turned out, did. Some lived in apartment houses and some in stucco coops, one in a tenement and a few in shacks; but most lived in houses solid and separate; and her oldest friend lived in a house only slightly less beautiful than her own. Though she was no snob and though she had never in her life said so to anyone, she

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could not imagine a better way to live than this; and she had decided long ago that she had a right to it. Whenever someone who had not yet made a treaty with his sense of injustice asked her how she could bear to live thus when so many must exist in the hovels and caves of poverty, then she would answer that all should be able to live as she did, that the sacrifice of her happiness would not ease their misery, that progress was a leveling upwards. She was her father's only child—her mother had died in childbirth —and when he had died he had left her this house and a fine income from the rent of several apartment buildings. Some of these apartments had declined into tenements and most were hideous, but they were better managed and cheaper than any others in town; when she was challenged for living off these rentals, she answered, justly, that it was a deplorable injustice, which, having inherited, she did with as best one could do; under another landlord her tenants would be worse off. When her older son, Eugene Gracchus, suggested once that she donate the apartments to their tenants, she was not even ruffled; it was logical in a way, as most of his ideas were, but like much logic it went counter to all her experience.

Her public life was a matter of committees and civic agencies and the expression of upright opinion. Hers was a philosophy full of sympathy and eschewing scandal, of hope and good works. She was in excellent health, she was an example of virtue and good fortune yet such an example as to baffle envy; she was respected more than most of us are and was hated less. Yet she was not a happy woman because of her children.

It is a Sunday afternoon in September, somewhat misty, as hot as it is likely to get in Oakland; there is a little breeze in from the sea; climate is not one of the enemies here. Even so, Gene is wearing the blue wool turtleneck shirt he usually wears around the house. He has never been a seaman; he likes this shirt because he is seldom too warm, and because his neck is long and thin and easily chilled, and because he is used to it. Gene is well over six feet, but he is so thin and pale that he gives the impression not of being tall but of being too long. Ruth is still lying down, on a cot in the back garden, waiting for the family to gather for dinner, as is their custom on the Sabbath. This dinner is about

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all that remains for them of that fourth commandment which their puritan ancestors made so much of once long ago.

"Mother."

His voice, which is not low, rises to its treble when he is excited in any uneasy way. It is high now.

"Hello, dear."

With a quick gesture Ruth lifts her arm from across her eyes, and quickly turns her head to look at him. She is ready to relax again if he has nothing important to say.

"Does anything need to be fixed for dinner?"

His huge, smooth bluff of a forehead is wrinkled. She can tell that he has something to say which it will take him many indirections to get at. She lays her arm by her side and stares up through the branches of the cherry tree spreading above her.

"No, dear. Miriam will help me get things ready."

"Well, Dorie will be here before long."

Dorie is his fiancée.

"I suppose."

It is Dorie's habit, three Sundays running, to arrive too late to help in the kitchen; the fourth Sunday she will come so early as to do more than her share. Gene has not noticed this habit of Dorie's. Ruth has; her "I suppose" is rather dry.

"Is E. O. going to be here for dinner?"

E. O. is Erasmus Oliver, who has exacted from everyone but his mother the obligation of calling him by his initials. He has told his friends that his father was a Texan who named him, in the Texas fashion, by initials only.

"He said at breakfast that he would be."

The puckered lines about her mouth, the combined result of determination and false teeth, become more puckered yet as she speaks of Oliver—with the determination of hiding the pain which thinking of him gives her.

"Is he going to get a new motorcycle?" asked Gene, though he knew the answer. His intention with these questions—at least what he accomplished with them—was to make his mother as little at peace as he himself was.

Ruth, however, did not understand about such tactics and would not have believed them of Gene if she had been told; she answered therefore truthfully and painfully.

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"I will not give him the money. That is not quite correct, I will do everything I can to prevent his owning a motorcycle. It is not the money. He says he will work for the money." She turned more directly toward Gene. "What can he do now? He has no training."

"He knows all about cars. Maybe he'll get a job in a garage."

"If that's what he wants," she answered. But the sadness was all in her eyes; her voice and mouth were controlled and allowed Oliver freely the right to work as he wished.

"There's nothing wrong with being a mechanic," Gene said.

"Nothing at all. It's the motorcycle that's so wrong. Everything it means."

She closed her eyes. Gene took a last puff on the cigarette he was holding and flipped it into the shrubbery. He walked restlessly to the other side of the cot and looked down at her.

"Mother," he began, his voice pitched a little higher than before.

"Yes, Eugene?"

"You know that I've been having good results in my chess lately."

"Yes, dear."

"The next international tournament is to be held in Tokyo."

She could not see how that information affected her. She did not answer.

"I may be invited to play."

"Really?" She half sat up with excitement. "You would be a master then?"

"Maybe. It depends on how well I would do."

Ruth saw little point in chess, except as a way of relaxing; but if Gene was going to take chess seriously, it was obviously best for him to be a master. Her congratulations were sincere, but as always when she spoke of chess there was a note of bewilderment in her voice.

"I am so glad for you. I hope with all my heart you do well. Do you know anything about the others?"

"Oh yes. There will be some excellent Russian players there. The great Polish master is dead."

"Well," she said, reclining again, "it makes me happy to think of you being there."

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Gene's brow wrinkled again, in irritation; he thought she was deliberately not helping him, whereas in truth she did not know he wanted her help.

"The point is, mother, I haven't the money to go if I'm invited."

Now for something as important to him as this Ruth would never have denied him the money, and Gene knew it. But Ruth herself did not know it, though he thought she did. He thought not only that she knew it but that the long process of reasoning herself into it, which she always went through, was a method of reproaching him. She had nothing like reproach in her mind; she was, though she did not know it, providing her conscience with good reasons for giving this money to him.

"How much more do you need, dear?" She put her arm back across her eyes; all he could see of her face was the rather stern-looking mouth, which irritated him too.

"$500. I've looked into the cost by boat. I'd rather not fly."

"When is it to be held?"

"Next May."

"You would have to leave in March."

"I'd rather go in February. As long as I'm there I'd like to see something of Japan."

She was silent. It was in her silences that he felt the reproach most keenly, the reproach of being 33 and good for nothing. A chess player. Lives in his mother's house. Doesn't even earn his own living but lives off the rents of houses which his grandfather paid for. A professional amateur. Couldn't get a good job if he wanted one.

"Then you would get married next summer."

"Yes."

In Ruth's mind, conscience was still tipping the scales. She had promised her sons to double their incomes when they were married. She thought what she allowed them was sufficient, and for simple tastes it would have been; neither of them had simple tastes. Also, she had promised a very heavy contribution to the American Civil Liberties Union for the prosecution of some white farmers who were combining to ruin the Japanese farmers in their county. She felt she ought not spare the money from that lawsuit for Gene's happiness.

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"Of course," he said, "I could borrow it. But I'd rather not be in debt when I marry."

His features seemed to crumple when he said this. Overtopped by his huge forehead they looked squeezed down by it, pushed together by too much intellect and anxiety and reproach. She could hear all this in the quaver in his voice, as of one who holds back tears or rage, and she could not bear it.

"No, son, no. You may have the money. I hope it gives you great satisfaction."

Her voice was steady and ungrudging; not very warm, but then it was never a very warm voice.

Gene walked off, not very happy. He stood looking at flowers for a time. Now on a lovely afternoon when there is nothing to do, one is supposed to enjoy natural life whether in a garden, a park or the countryside; and Gene had often done so, or thought he had. He was especially fond of going with Dorie to the Golden Gate Park and walking about or sitting on the lawns all an afternoon, and when he had been a child his mother could give him no greater treat than to take him to the country for a day. Now he stood looking at a bank of wisteria and felt nothing; he was too honest to pretend he was liking the flowers, but he was mystified, as he had been before, at his own emptiness, its cause. What he lacked was eyes of another to see through, warmth of another to feel the beauty through, another's openness to open him. He stood staring dejectedly, and at the sound of his sister's maternal yoo-hoo and her children's yelps, he ran upstairs to his room. He liked Miriam but she showed him nothing; he was fond of George and Penny but children's candor alarmed him a little; and he thought her husband Bill, who was an actuary and a ski enthusiast, to be a thumping bore.

He found Dorie writing at his desk.

"Dorothea!" he exclaimed. "When did you come?"

"Hello, Gene." She looked at him a little abstractedly. "I had to finish a letter to Pris and all the dogs in town were barking under my window. Do you mind?"

"Of course not. Go ahead."

He walked over and patted her shoulder; she squeezed his hand with a rather mechanical affectionateness and turned back to her

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letter. Gene lay on his bed looking at his room, which, though he had lived in it for 29 years, pleased him as the wisteria was supposed to have done.

He liked the roof-beams above him and the redwood paneling; he found the irregularities in its shape, caused by two closets, to be a convenience as well as a guard against the box-like effect a room can give. He liked the Klee painting he had on the wall over the desk and the Braque over the bookcase: the books, which were not numerous but very well used; the piano, which he had learned to play on as a child and still did not neglect; the confusion of equipment in the corner where he was himself assembling the best possible record player; the low chair and ottoman; the plywood chess board stuck behind the bookcase and the cheap chess men, chipped and dirty, scattered on the desk; the rugless floor; the hard mattress; Dorie at his desk. Liked everything in the room—which almost contained his life—except himself. As he lay on the bed, pleased with what he had done and what he was going to do but not with himself doing it, he realized that it would take more than an absent-minded pat on the hand from Dorie to make him feel good again.

She had stopped writing for a moment and sat gazing out the window.

"What are you saying to Pris? Give her my best."

"What?" said Dorie turning toward him and focusing her eyes on him.

"I said, what are you writing to Pris about?"

"Oh nothing much."

"Well, come over and give me a kiss. I'm a little low."

"I'm busy, darling."

"What are you writing about? Your bridal plans?"

He thought he was being ironic, but as often happened to him his irony was neither strong enough nor delivered in such a way as to make its intent clear. People would take his ironies straight, or think he was being facetious, or ignore them altogether. Dorie took this one straight.

"In a way."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, I was telling her the possibilities in this house, when we ever get a chance to fix it over."

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He reared up in dismay.

"What do you mean? What's wrong with it as it is?"

This house had sheltered him all his life, he liked it, it had been kept in good repair. He could just conceive of living in another house, but this one he could not imagine improved by anyone and certainly not by Dorie, whose taste, though he loved her, he deplored.

"I was telling her what a distinguished-looking room the living room would be if the walls were white plaster and maybe, though I'm not sure, if the ceiling were white too, in between the beams."

She stole a look at him; she knew she was trespassing and wanted to see how he accepted it. His forehead was wrinkled, his eyebrows were raised, he was stroking his jaw with one finger; it was an expression and gesture characteristic of him when he was observing or trying to understand something. She went on.

"The kitchen of course would have to be redone from one end to the other. It's hopelessly out of date." He did not even blink. "I think those brown shingles on the outside walls are very drab. Wouldn't it be more striking to put grey composition shingles over them?"

"No," he said, whinnying with annoyance.

"They're fireproof too."

"My mother would never consent to modernizing this house, and besides she has three children. Why should we have it to ourselves? You're wasting your time."

"It's terribly dark and gloomy. The only thing it has is a good floor plan and lots of windows, but it's terribly inefficient. It's *slow,* if you know what I mean."

"I don't and I don't want to." His voice was at the top of its register but not loud. "And even if we inherit it I wouldn't agree to a single one of your ideas. I like it and I feel an obligation not to change it."

She saw it would be a long campaign. She chose to be feminine at the moment and went over to kiss him.

"You're too late for that," he said pushing her off. "Besides, you ought to go down and help mother and Miriam."

"All right, darling. Just one kiss to show you love me."

They kissed. She coquetted with him a minute, shaking her hair in his face and biting his nose with her lips; he smiled. She went back to finish her letter and he watched her.

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Gene was a great watcher; his favorite way of dealing with his fellows was to watch them. People at concerts, at ball games, at church, skid-row bums, a class of deaf and dumb children being herded through the zoo, pregnant women standing in street cars, children playing paper dolls or chasing each other, himself in a mirror, his mother, Dorie now. He prowled the city like a photographer, looking; and he saw as well as a good camera. Not as a good photographer, but a good camera, for there were too many things which he was afraid of for him to be able, as a good photographer must, to love or pity or censure—or, most god-like of all, to forgive—all that he saw so very clearly. Mostly he saw curiosities and matter for jest. He would follow a woman with a cleft palate and a Louisiana drawl as she bought food from counter to counter in the Tenth Street Market, watching her anger and timidity with clerks and listening to her cloud-like words form and amalgamate and seem to mean something and dissolve: she became a joke to tell. He liked to get a glimpse of people who had not pulled their blinds clear down undressing for bed, not for pruriency's sake but because they looked so ludicrous scratching, yawning, half-naked, so much like each other. It is true of course that he was not always just the camera; a mother with her baby, a Negro in a street car full of whites, or always a blind man, such as these he saw with more than his physical eyes. But now as he lay watching his fiancée, it was a joke for himself that he was after.

"Dorie," he said, "can you move around this way a little. I like to look at your leg like that."

Flattered, she obliged him, but it was not her legs he wanted to see. They were plump and not well tapered at the knee and ankle; crossed as they were now, the fleshy calf was pushed out of shape, and besides the crossed leg stuck out at an angle of pure vulgarity. It was not her legs he wanted but for her to think it was; also he could get a better profile of her whole person thus. It was a pleasant, rotund little profile; after a child or two it would be dumpy. The babyishness of her face was accentuated by her soft and fluffy hair and her ready smile; as Gene knew, the babyishness was flatly contradicted by the coolness and judging in her pale blue eyes. She was concentrating on her letter, or seeming to; he could see her glance, however, rest on her leg from time to time. She adjusted her skirt so that it came down a

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little further over her untrim knee. As though tired of her shoes she slipped them off; her arched feet were her prettiest point, her feet and the coloring of her skin like a fresh strawberry peach. When she, so nonchalantly, dropped the shoe off, Gene felt that his joke had worked; content, he went to the window to watch the family in the garden.

His tall and slightly stooped sister and his dumpy little mother were just turning from a flower bed to go into the house. They were talking; he could tell by the way his mother was patting the back of one hand in the palm of the other that something had put her out of patience. Bill was on the cot reading the Sunday paper, and the children were climbing the apple tree. A sprinkler was revolving sedately in one corner of the lawn. It wasn't much of a scene, no cleft palates or goiters in it, but Gene was feeling a sentimental glow over it as he watched—sentimental because, if he had been down in it, it would have seemed quite different to him, full of little dangers to be guarded against. Dorie, ignored, left her letter and came to stand beside him.

"How can Miriam look so sleek, a mother of two kids?" she said in her unbabyish voice, with a lingering on certain vowels that some women learn at sorority houses and neglect to unlearn afterwards.

Miriam was sleek after a lean fashion. If you were in the mood to see her that way. Gene was not. He was thinking Miriam looked well groomed or chic.

"No," he said contemplatively, "she isn't a bit frowsy, is she?"

He went over to the confusion of wires about the record player and began doing something. Dorie looked to see if her slip was showing and returned to the letter, but she could not concentrate on it any longer. She put on her shoes and before going downstairs she went over to kiss Gene. He was still annoyed at her; he responded to her kiss with some amorous horseplay of a kind she disliked. But their parting sounded amiable enough. Dorie because she was still making amends for her earlier trespass, Gene because he thought he was being ironic in his amiability, and because it is so risky not to be amiable.

"And the American Medical Association?" Ruth was saying, tapping one hand nervously in the other.

"I'm afraid they'll be against it, but one can never be sure."

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"On the contrary, one can be quite sure. I'm grateful for organizations like the AMA and the American Legion. You always know precisely where they'll be and what they'll want and how they'll go about getting it, and you always know that in a pitched battle they'll win."

"Mother, I never heard you sound so cynical."

"It's called realistic," said Ruth very dryly.

"Mother!"

"Go ahead, my dear, take your own path. If I were thirty-five I would do it as you are doing it. By the time you've learned all the tricks for yourself, you'll be taking naps every afternoon too."

"You think," said Miriam a little timidly, "that I've just been wasting my time? I hoped—"

"Nothing of the kind. You will have awakened a few more people to their responsibilities."

Miriam groaned.

"You might even succeed," said Ruth.

"My God! I want to get something done! Awaken people to their responsibilities."

"Think of it this way, if it makes you feel better. I do sometimes. In every good deed you do, by just so much do you retard the progress of corruption."

Ruth was very fond of this sentence, and Miriam had heard her say it a score of times before; yet never had it penetrated so far as it did now. She groaned again; there was not a trace of humor in this groan as there had been in the first one.

"Pay no attention to what I've said, dear," said Ruth. In a rare demonstration of affection, she kissed Miriam on the cheek. "I'm out of sorts today." And then, with an association of ideas she herself did not recognize, her voice changing with the change of subject, she added: "Did you know that Gene is going to Tokyo next spring to play in the chess tournament?"

"No!" Miriam exclaimed, relieved to have something cheerful to exclaim at. "The world championship tournament?"

"I believe so. He'll marry Dorie when he comes back."

"Mother!" yelled George. "Look!"

He was straddling two limbs high up in the apple tree. He achieved the effect he desired: the women came squawking in alarm to get him down, and he in an affectation of being disgruntled lowered himself to a safer limb. Bill had fallen asleep

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with the paper over his face, and Penny was sitting in the lowest crotch of the tree eating an apple. Surveying their work with approval and possessive pride, the mother and daughter turned to the kitchen.

Dorie entered one door as they the other.

There was an involuntary change in Miriam the moment she saw Dorie. Miriam too had attended a sorority in college, though only for a year; and although she had hated the sorority and although she was not proud of the accomplishment, she could be as shellacked, as hard, as stamped by the great machine, as the next woman, and in Dorie's presence she assumed that smiling and vacant-hearted type she deplored. All during the preparation of dinner the two kept up a chatter about food and clothes, meaning nothing but that they did not like each other.

It distressed neither of them, but only Ruth; Ruth did not chatter, and she would never have permitted herself to dislike her daughter or her future daughter-in-law—except perhaps when she first woke up in the morning, when all things seemed worse to her and at the same time less hopeless. Yet, even so, there was something in Ruth which was not unlike their machined perfection. Her undemonstrativeness might have become their empty assertions of affection: there were too many darlings in their acquaintance; they so loved to do this or that; things were too frequently charming. Her reserve, which was a respect for the privacy of others, might have become their dreadful intimacy, which permitted them at a bridge table to describe their husbands' potency, and their yet more dreadful aloneness when trouble marked them and left them only the hard and hollow sympathy of their friends. Her house might not have meant to her grace and a decent life but have been a cause of pride, as it would have been for them, a thing of which others should be made envious.

Sometimes as she was lying in bed the first thing in the morning it seemed to Ruth that those who like Dorie and Miriam would arrogate to themselves this air of cold superiority must surely be mean spirits, but later in the day she would reprove herself for her unkind thoughts and remember their excellences. What she found very hard to forgive in them was the pride they took in their meanness: snobbery is a small but nasty version of that most cardinal sin.

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"Mother," said Miriam as she was preparing the salad, "I do hope E. O. gets here for dinner." Her tone of voice was warm and genuine for she was fond of her younger brother, and furthermore it was a tactful thing for her to say. She had noticed his absence, she had observed her mother prick up her ears when a car seemed to be stopping in front of the house, she knew how much her mother counted on these family dinners; more, she knew with what pain her mother would account to them for his absence at table. But lest it seem tact and only tact she added, what was perfectly true but did not have to be added, "He's so nice with the children." In it all there was nothing but affection and honest feeling. Yet she could be so catty and unkind as to make Ruth sick at heart.

And Dorie, though the cattiness seemed more natural to her, had far too much strength of character actually to become the role she played. Her baby face, her smooth manner, her naive opinions on public matters, these were devices she used to get what she wanted. In her first husband she had married the type which fitted the type she seemed to be; he was a handsome, country-club, fun-loving dealer of a man, a successful broker, a baffled husband, and venal to his marrow. She had divorced him, and now what she wanted was Gene, no one knew why, not even Gene, no one but herself and she could not have explained it with her impure, machined vocabulary which had no words for motive as complex as this. Without the words for an idea it is very difficult to have the idea at all; she called it love, though she knew that love was the least of it, and everybody was satisfied but Ruth.

The family sat down to dinner half an hour late, but without Oliver.

Oliver was in quite another part of town, one where he felt more at home than in his mother's house. He was at Iggy's Igloo down on East Fourteenth Street. The hot rod gang usually hung out at Sleepy's, on 92nd Avenue below East Twelfth Street; but Oliver and his best friend Jack felt they had got beyond the hot rod stage, so they went to Iggy's, a motorcyclists' hangout. They were not contemptuous of hot rods by any means; a hot rod can kill you as dead as a motorcycle, but, it was their opinion, it would

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not kill you quite so soon. The way they put it to themselves was: A rod's okay, but there's more kick in a bike. After Oliver had wrecked his third rod he had not built up another but was saving himself for a motorcycle; Jack had traded his rod in before he had wrecked it, and now had an old but still lethal English bike.

A little after noon they had roared up, Oliver sitting behind Jack, to Iggy's, revved her up and turned off the ignition so she would backfire, and gone in for some beer. Iggy did not care whether they were under age as long as they sat in the back room to drink the beer.

Iggy was alone at a table in the main room, half asleep over the Sunday paper.

"Hey Iggy!" shouted Jack.

"What's the matter, man?" said Oliver. "Stay up too late last night?"

"Well, boys," said Iggy pushing himself to a standing position, "is it beer already you want today?"

"You got it, man," said Oliver snapping his hat at Iggy, "you got it. Two of the brew."

Oliver had been wearing for the past couple of days a very small black bowler cocked over one eye. It was held in place by an elastic that went around his head; upon the slightest provocation he would pull it away from his forehead and let it snap back. His intention was to set a new fad, but the fad wasn't taking on much. The hat was decidedly silly, and most people, even most motorcyclists, do not like to look silly, in their own eyes at least. Oliver, however, rather liked to make himself look silly: he had a pervasive sense of his own unimportance, which he could make good use of only by seeming to ridicule himself. Yet he was not a buffoon; he would not obtrude himself upon other people as much as a buffoon must. His attitude was: I'll go along with everything and have a good time and be one of the boys, but if I happen to become the center of attention somehow or other, I'll be all prepared to be laughed at. Consequently he wore a small, tight smile on his lips nearly all the time, embarrassed, deprecatory, supercilious, ironic, friendly, depending on how you looked at it. Consequently too he was a leader of his friends only in the matter of fads; there he was ahead of them all.

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They went into the back room and sat at a small round table with a red check cloth on it. On one wall there was a shelf with two large and handsome steins on it, and on the other walls were rather soft photographs of Bavaria.

"Hey, Iggy," said Oliver when the beer arrived, "anybody been around yet?"

"No, today you are the first."

"What's the matter, Iggy?" said Jack jovially. "You're droopy. Best friend die?"

Iggy smiled and shrugged his shoulders; but his watery blue eyes behind their glasses said, though not to them exactly: To an old exile all friends are dead. He went back to his paper.

"Hey," said Jack to Oliver, "you get the money for a bike?"

"Naw, I can't get my hands on it till I'm 21."

"Your old lady won't give it to you?"

"Naw. I'm going to get me a job."

And Jack laughed, with a sort of bellowing formality recognized by them as expressing incredulity.

"Oh, E. O., what you going to be this time, a garbage collector?"

Oliver's tight little smile, which had nothing to do with mirth, tried to be supercilious, tried to suggest he knew something that Jack couldn't guess. But Jack wasn't fooled; since he had known him, Oliver had kept none of his jobs for more than a few weeks. Oliver had picked fruit, driven a delivery truck, been a surveyor's helper, washed dishes, worked in a cannery, worked in a warehouse, and held a dozen more jobs like these; either he had simply not showed up for work one day or he'd been fired for loafing, or else he'd earned as much money as he'd wanted at the time and then had formally quit.

"I got me an in at the Plumbers' Union," he said. "They make good dough."

"Yeh?" said Jack full of doubt. "How you going to get in?"

"I know somebody who knows somebody."

Jack shrugged with apparent indifference.

"How good of a bike you going to get?"

"I figure I'll borrow me $700 and pay it back in a year. That'll get me a pretty fair motor."

"Nobody'll lend you $700."

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Oliver just smiled. Jack shrugged again; it was his favorite gesture.

"You got one lined up?"

"No," said Oliver leaning forward, "but I know what I'm going to get when I lay my hands on that ten thousand. I'm going to get me a chrome job, with a straight pipe and a butterfly cut-out. . . ."

He'd been through the catalogue of his motorcycle's charms so often that both he and Jack knew it by heart, but the more elaborate and set his imaginings of it the keener was his anticipation. He had hardly got started on his recital when some one came in the front door. A melodious, feminine voice spoke to Iggy; Oliver continued, unconsciously raising his voice a little. When he had quite finished, Jack suggested his favorite variation, harder but puncture-proof tires; Oliver responded, "Aaah, I'll get me a new set of tires every month." And the curtain to the back room parted to a young woman in motorcycle clothes. She was brown-skinned and had short black hair; she was strong and carried herself like a man, though her figure was amply female; her eyes were dark and bold, her face was impassive, and her thin lubricious lips scarcely moved when she spoke.

"Hi, Jack," she said; she seemed to be trying to make her beautiful voice harsh but succeeded only in making it sound flat and strained.

"Hello, Jo Ann."

"Who's your friend?" she said pointing at Oliver with the glass of beer in her hand.

"E. O. Adams. Come on and sit down."

"E. O. Adams? I've heard about you."

"This is Jo Ann Rakoczi," said Jack.

Oliver's little smile tried to express indifference but he only looked pleased.

"Pleased to meet you," he said. "You have a nice motor."

She nodded and looked at him without expression. Oliver was excited, for he had seen her at the head of her gang a dozen times, fearless and confident it seemed to him; he had seen her perform a perfect figure eight in the middle of East Twelfth Street, stopping the traffic with complete nonchalance. He thought she was beautiful, and she would have been beautiful if

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it had not been for the hardness with which she shellacked herself and which Oliver admired in her.

Under her gaze he did not know what to say; he knew that boasting would not succeed with her, and he felt that the exaggerated cowardice with which he sometimes talked about his hot rod exploits would not amuse her. So he said nothing but only stared at the ring on her hand. Saying nothing became Oliver; he was well-built and handsome, and though he sat in a sort of slouch and though his face was marred by a scar on the cheek, he looked like a strong man affecting indifference to his strength. His embarrassment, which was really a kind of modesty, seemed to Jo Ann, disguised as it was by his smile and his slouch, a kind of indifference to herself; to overcome this indifference without seeming to became her immediate object.

"You're all alone?" asked Jack.

"Yes," she answered. "We had a party last night. Everybody else is still laid up from it."

"Sit down," said Oliver dragging a chair into place with his foot.

"Thanks. Say," she said to him, "it sounds like you're after a pretty sharp motor."

"Yeh. I'm coming into some dough in a few months."

"What you got now?"

"Nothing. I wrecked my last rod, but I'm tired of rods. Kid stuff."

"Oh I don't know," she said looking at the scar on his cheek. "I got up to 135 out in Richmond one time in a rod. Brakes wasn't worth a damn either."

"Oh, yeh," said Oliver hastily, "*high-grade* kid stuff, but a bike's got more kick to it."

"Oh, yeh," said Jo Ann, "a lot more kick."

"A lot more," said Jack.

"I know a guy," said Jo Ann, "that's got a damn good motor he'd probably sell. Want to go see it?"

"How much he want for it?"

"$400. It's a good machine. Not as good as mine except on turns. It's a little heavier. But it's got as much soup as I've got."

"I got no money."

"Borrow some. Get a job."

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"Of course, this one would just fill in. I'm coming into some real money in a few months."

And suddenly, with a boldness that astonished himself, Oliver looked down straight into her eyes and then at her lips.

"Sure," he said as though he was meaning something else. "I'll come with you. Give me a ride?"

"Sure."

Oliver turned to Jack.

"You got anything to do?"

"No," said Jack getting up expectantly, "I got nothing to do."

"Well, find something, man," said Oliver winking at him in such a way that Jo Ann would not see it. They left Jack crestfallen.

Oliver had never intentionally been so rude to anyone before in his life. He judged that any man whom Jo Ann admired would do things like this and he winked to soften the unkindness to his friend. But as they roared away toward Alameda, his conscience was uneasy.

He yelled in Jo Ann's ear, intending to say, How long have you known Jack?, but saying instead, "What's Jack to you?"

"When we used to be kids, we were neighbors. What's it to you?"

"I don't know. He's my buddy."

"Yeh, but he hasn't got much nerve."

They didn't speak again because of the noise, but Oliver felt impelled to tell her one of his what-a-coward-I-was stories, impelled by an obscure sort of loyalty to Jack whom he had betrayed and who was cowardly too, and by a sense of flying under false colors now with Jo Ann. So when they stopped in front of Jo Ann's house in Alameda, he told her, with grotesque exaggeration, how he had been so frightened in a time-run on the Richmond streets once, because the hot rod before him had blown a tire and rolled over, that he had cut his rod out at 85 with the excuse that his supercharger had gone on the fritz. The story was true; but he told it so quietly and with such great exaggeration that Jo Ann thought he was making it up to defend his friend; she thought he was saying, "Even a brave man can lose his nerve sometimes," and she admired him for his loyalty, his honesty and his courage.

The motorcycle for sale belonged to Jo Ann's brother, who was at sea. Oliver climbed on it and followed Jo Ann up the steepest

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streets to Skyline Boulevard, and there he performed feats which froze his guts with fear and at the same time flushed his face with pride. But the only tribute that he won from her was when he performed a power spin that nearly pulled his left leg off.

"Say," she said, "that's good. You ought to get a steel shoe."

"I will," he replied, "when I get me a real bike."

And he roared down the winding road so fast he had to clench his teeth to keep them from chattering but always with the tight little smile and always ready to wave nonchalantly at his friend who was not afraid. She was not afraid in truth; she had discovered exactly how good she was on a motorcycle, and she would do anything up to her limit and nothing beyond it. She was as afraid as Oliver of seeming afraid; but she was wiser than he, less reckless, for he was afraid not only of fear itself but of the danger as well; that was an emotion she had not felt, purely and simply, for years. A rock in the road was something to avoid for her; for him it meant five painfully broken ribs or a broken neck.

At about 3:30, feeling hungry, they roared down the hills to 17 Denver Place and roared up the driveway to the garage just as the rest of the family were starting to eat dessert.

"That's where my room is," he said to Jo Ann, pointing to the room over the garage; then he led her into the dining room.

"Hi, mom," he said snapping the black bowler at her; she had begged him the day before not to wear it in the house. "This is Jo Ann; Jo Ann, my mother. Those are the rest of my family."

Ruth concealed the hurt she felt and said how do you do in an even voice. Gene looked at Jo Ann in her jeans and kidney belt and tight man's shirt, at Oliver, at his mother; he said nothing but watched them all three closely, holding his eye-brows very high. Miriam was furious, said nothing, glared at Oliver. Oliver missed none of their reactions.

"You got to the pie already," he said. "We'll go out in the kitchen and get some of the stuff that's left over."

"I'll fix it for you here," said Ruth. "I can easily lay another place."

"Don't bother," said Oliver. "Jo Ann can dish it up. Anyway, we aren't dressed for the occasion." He leered at Miriam, who was as always well turned out. "I'm thinking of buying her brother's bike."

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"What?" said Ruth in a sharp constrained voice.

"Sure," said Oliver; it was easier for him to say these painful words to his mother in front of everyone and casually, for he knew that she could not reproach him openly here and now. "He's at sea and it's a good job."

"Please, Oliver," she said, "for my sake—"

And no one knew what was threatening Ruth at that moment —Oliver because he dared not see it, Dorie because she did not wish to, Gene because it was so risky—no one but Miriam. Only she saw on Ruth's face the dark shadow pass, heard in Ruth's voice the cracked will, felt in her own sympathetic heart the stark and nameless fear. Stark: she put her hand on her mother's arm and held it tightly; nameless: when she saw Ruth's self-composure return, she did not seek to name that fear but to forget it.

All this took but a few moments. Oliver snapped the bowler again and pushed Jo Ann before him into the kitchen.

Oliver accomplished a great deal in this minute of boorishness; and it was boorishness: he knew the amenities and had violated them for his own purposes. For one thing he infuriated his sister, and that was always worth the trouble. For another, he put his mother in her place for not giving him the money for a motorcycle; of course she did not know that the pain he was giving her was for that reason, but he knew it and felt that it justified him in what he did. But only barely justified him, for he had another reason for his behavior, of which he was not aware: his family was certain to disapprove of Jo Ann; by hitting first he protected himself against their disapproval, especially against his mother's, which he could hardly bear. He need not, of course, have brought Jo Ann here at all, but he wanted to impress her with his mother's house and the style in which they lived. Though he himself lived in an uncharming room littered with bolts and dime magazines, he was proud of his mother, her house and her life; it all seemed useless to him, but pretty: to Oliver, part of the prettiness of a thing was always its inutility.

And then too he wanted to seem strong and dominating and indifferent in the eyes of Gene and Jo Ann. With Jo Ann he succeeded; with Gene he failed completely. Oliver held Gene in a peculiar respect; for, though he was contemptuous of Gene's physical frailty and what seemed to him his unmanliness, yet he was

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rather in awe of Gene's intellect. "He's a brain," Oliver would tell his friends, who all felt about a brain as he did: after all scientists are brains and everybody knows about scientists. But even about his unmanliness Oliver was not sure; after all Gene always managed to get women to go around with, and here he was engaged to quite a good-looking one. More, Gene had been in the war and Oliver hadn't; it is true that Gene, who had been conscripted against his will, had spent his time in an office decoding messages and not out shooting or bombing the enemy, but still decoding messages is sort of like the FBI and everybody knows about the FBI. Perhaps worst of all was that Oliver knew of no way by which he could hurt Gene, short of knocking him down, but Gene could make Oliver very uneasy simply by raising his eyebrows high and staring right at him as though he were decoding him. Therefore Oliver was trying to appear tough in Gene's eyes now; he would have winced almost physically if he had realized that Gene was pitying his shaky bravado.

With Jo Ann he succeeded, however. Jo Ann would never have been allowed to speak so rudely to her mother, who was old-fashioned about teaching children their manners. Jo Ann thought that Oliver kept his family in their place; she took Ruth's silence for submission to his domination, though it was far from that, and admired him for it. Therefore when a little later Oliver slapped her on her ample bottom as she was leaning over to pick up a spoon, Jo Ann did not hit him fiercely as she would normally have done but said menacingly and close to him, "What'd you do that for?" And when he grabbed her and kissed her, she kissed him back. It was hard to make her submit, but once down she was fierce in demanding that she be held down hard.

Jo Ann was not alone in thinking that Ruth had submitted to Oliver.

"Mother," said Miriam indignantly when Oliver and Jo Ann had disappeared into the kitchen, "why do you let him get away with stuff like that? It's terrible."

"He's a man now," said Ruth gravely. Her lips were pursed up with pain but her eyes and voice were steady. "He's free to do as he wishes, as you are, my dear."

But Miriam fumed on, outraged and inconsistent. As a mother she gave Penny and George even more freedom and indulgence

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than she herself had been allowed when a child; she put up with their rages and insults with great equanimity, acceded to many of their wishes, and let them have very bad manners. But she could not bear to think that at the age of 20 they would still be capable of such behavior as this of Oliver's; according to her scheme, will should automatically assert itself at some point in a child's career, bringing with it good manners, respect for convention and a sense of adult responsibility. It all seemed so simple to Miriam because she had been contented with herself most of her life. Contented, she could afford, when she wished, to seem considerate of others, which makes up for any amount of technical flaw in manners. She might have bethought herself, had she not been so satisfied with her lot, that one who is truly guided by a code of behavior, as she thought herself to be, need not and can not employ that code of bitchery she used so readily with Dorie; that Oliver, who was far from content with himself and had like herself been allowed much freedom as a child, was behaving perhaps more crudely than she behaved with Dorie, but no worse. Instead of so reflecting, she indulged herself in that sort of indignation which comes not from seeing injustice done but from seeing someone else betray one of your placid beliefs as you might have done it yourself.

"Mother, I think this knuckling under to Oliver is a shocking dereliction of duty on your part."

"Do you? To my mind, love for my children is more important than any duty, and love forgives." But she spoke with a voice in which there was more censure of Miriam than forgiveness of her, and furthermore her practice as a mother had been the reverse of this statement.

"One of your duties was, as you saw it, to love us," said Gene blandly. "Always. And don't forget—Miriam is your child too."

Ruth felt that if she stayed at this table any longer she would break down. Without excusing herself she went to her room and lay on the bed. When Miriam had accused her of neglecting her duty, Ruth had felt unfairly blamed; she had done something wrong, so she deserved blame; but it had been an error in judgment and not in intent, so she deserved commiseration as well. And when Gene had said that she should have forgiven her child Miriam too, she knew that he had said it not because it was true,

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though it seemed to be true, but because it would hurt. So, as she lay on her bed, it seemed to her that Oliver's cruelty, so much more childlike, so much less willed than theirs, was the action of one to whom she had done some secret injury that neither of them understood and neither had wanted; and as she lay there love for him filled her heart and dread of the damage she was yet to do.

Miriam, full of wrath—wrath the greater for the moment of dread she had felt on her mother's account and had then put out of her mind—went into the kitchen and asked Oliver in an affable voice if he had heard that Ruth had given Gene the money to go to Japan for his chess tournament; she did it not to wound Oliver but to cause her mother trouble. She succeeded.

At first, in his generosity of heart, Oliver rushed in and congratulated Gene on his good fortune; and there was a general concord for a time, with Jo Ann silent on the sidelines ignoring the children who wanted to talk to her. But this amity did not suit Miriam at all. As she stood at the front door with Bill—they were leaving the children till evening while they went to a cocktail party—she said to Oliver with a burst of machined enthusiasm: "Now you can get the money for a new motorcycle, E. O. Maybe Jo Ann's brother's."

Oliver was happy, but Gene saw what she had done.

"Good-bye now," said Miriam sweetly. "Take good care of my children."

She took Bill in tow and left.

Gene and Jo Ann were silent, for their separate reasons. Dorie was in a friendly mood and tried to start a conversation: that Ruth and Miriam had done rather badly elevated Dorie's spirits, though she herself had done nothing, whether good or bad. But no one took her gambits. Oliver would have had he not been moved by desire; on pretext of showing Jo Ann around the place he took her up to his room.

The children, under the supervision of Gene and Dorie, who were doing dishes, seemed quite content to play by themselves in the back; it was a mild evening, and there were very few ways they could hurt themselves except on the motorcycles beside the garage, and those were forbidden them; Dorie went to the back

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door once in a while to glance at them. One time they ran up the stairs to Oliver's room, but he had locked the door as he always did whether at home or abroad; Dorie saw them coming down the stairs again and ordered them to stay away from his room.

Her feeling of elevation had not left her, and with it was coming a feeling of amorousness. The soft and pleasant air, the absence of anything urgent to do and of anyone to impress herself upon, Gene's rather attentive glances at Jo Ann before she had disappeared with Oliver, the not having made love for a long while, all these combined to turn her mind to love-making. So when Gene, as they were finishing the dishes, began some of his amorous horseplay, which meant this time not that he was annoyed with her but that he was ready if she was and if she wasn't she could tell him to quit, no harm done, Dorie responded in the way that meant she was ready too—that is, she began to talk in a serious manner about all the arrangements, the ways and means, the possible obstacles, who might interrupt, ought anything else to be done first. Dorie was not afraid to talk about love; on the contrary, with fearless frankness, in a special tone of voice, she would scrutinize all the mechanics of love-making with that dispassionateness which, like a shamed but flagrant nakedness, can be so sure a safeguard for one afraid of love itself. It was a chilling beginning all in all, and Gene was, as usual, chilled.

Their arrangements were made. She was to go to his room and wait for him there till Ruth awoke. She would be safe there, for Gene allowed no one but Dorie, not even his mother, to go into his room ever. When Ruth came down, he told her that he didn't know where Oliver was and that Dorie had gone home and then went up to his room and Dorie.

While the small children were still in the house, to be watched and read to and fed, Ruth was in a happy frame of mind. But after Miriam and Bill had returned after dark and picked the children up, Ruth suddenly felt empty and nervous. She wandered through the house disconsolately, nor did its familiar beauty please her at all; for in it, hiding in it, holed up in it as it seemed to her, was her son Gene who, though a full-grown man, did nothing but play chess. For all she knew, indeed she

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was sure of it, Dorie was in his room with him. Not even as an excuse to herself did she disapprove of their love-making; yet she could not remain in the same house with them. More deeply than she knew, she, who had not had a man for twenty years, resented this woman of Gene's. Outdoors, she saw the gleaming handlebars of the motorcycles and knew that up in his room Frederick Kotowski's son had taken a woman, and knew furthermore that if she asked him he would deny it. She did not know why her sons thought they had to deceive her.

She lay down on the cot, for it was still a warm night. She was conscious only of the bright stars and of the darkness in which they were lost, and she felt not just in words but with her whole heart that it had been better for her if she had never been born.

As she lay there she heard the door to Oliver's room open; she could see him descend the stairs and go to the dark house. The light went on in the kitchen, and she could hear him opening cupboards and clashing silverware. She arose and went in the back door.

He started when she came in.

"Hi, mom. Where've you been?"

"Lying on my cot in the backyard. It's a beautiful night."

"It sure is."

"Do you want me to fix you a little snack?"

He could not refuse her without an explanation of why he wanted to take a double portion to his room to eat; rather ungraciously he thanked her and sat down.

"Where's Gene, mom?"

"Up in his room, I think. Miriam and Bill came for the children a little while ago."

"They're mighty sweet kids. Penny's the cutest little girl I ever saw."

"She's awfully fond of you, Oliver."

"Yeh," he said with pleasure, "she is."

A little silence began, which both of them tried to think of a way to fill. Pleasantly Ruth began another subject for small talk, a movie she wanted him to see; it was a short-lived topic too.

Oliver thought that his mother was going to reprove him for coming to dinner late, entering rudely and with the black bowler

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on, and bringing in Jo Ann so brusquely; as their mutual uneasiness increased, as he gulped without pleasure the good food she prepared for him, he began to think that she wanted not to reprove him openly but to punish him by making him thus uncomfortable, and this deviousness he resented. She, on the other hand, had no such intention at all—quite the reverse. In the sadness that had overcome her as she was lying on the cot, it seemed to her that everything that had gone wrong with her children must surely have been her own fault, though she did not understand what she had done and knew she had not done whatever it was intentionally. She too was thinking of his cruelty this afternoon, but she felt that somehow she had made him do it to her; her pain she could stand, every mother must, but the thought that she had driven him to it, against his own nature, she could not bear. She wanted him to forgive her for having made him do it, and she thought he understood her impulse and rejected it; mistakenly she thought the sullenness of his mistaken resentment was unforgiveness, and her feeling of guilty failure deepened.

But while these complex misunderstandings made a barrier between the mother and son, they were not the chief danger; that was too great for either of them to face before they had to. That was the event which Oliver's resentment and Ruth's sense of failure were preparing them for; it was painful and wasteful, and neither of them wanted it and both felt it was coming, and nothing anyone could have done could have prevented it.

"Hey mom," Oliver said forcing himself up from his sullenness; there had been a long, grave silence which he felt he should interrupt by a triviality, but the pressure that made him speak was so great that it was no trivial thing he said. "Hey mom, Sis says Gene's going to go to Japan."

"Yes," she said brightening. Both of them respected Gene's intellect; that was something in this strait.

"Is he going to be the world's champion, do you think?"

"I certainly hope so. It would be a fine feather in his cap."

"That'd be swell, all right." He had finished eating. He should have left his mother before speaking again, before the danger had been exposed and run toward; but that would have happened only if he had known what he was about to do, and he did not.

"How much money will it take him to get there?"

"I don't know, dear. He had to have $500 from me." She

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ought not have said that last, but it was true and she told the truth, and it took the last step in the dark, the step that both of them had been dreading in that way only with which one dreads a sure pain.

"Well, gee, mom, that bike of Jo Ann's brother's only costs $400. Let me have it, will you? It's only fair. I'll pay you back when I get that ten thousand."

With all her heart she wanted to say yes, here it is; he would have loved her then and forgiven her. But she had decided long ago that it would have been wrong for her to encourage him in his destructive passion for fast cars and motorcycles; she felt it to be her duty to try to restrain him from his desperate courses until he had matured a little and straightened out. She had told him all this before, more than once; but he was nearly a man now, he would have his $10,000 soon. She could have given in without any great sense of shame. She probably would have given in, had it not been for one thing: it would have been a method of bribing his love, more, of bribing her own conscience, of cheating her sense of failure, and that her pride would not let her do. So once again she allowed her duty to thwart her impulse; while her understanding of her duty was very likely sound and good, her impulse was sounder and better yet, for her impulse was usually to do something for someone and her duty was usually, it seemed, to abstain.

"No," she said. "You know how I feel about your motorcycle, Oliver. Won't you please me just a little—"

"What the hell!" he shouted suddenly and stood up. "Gene gets this, Gene gets that, now he gets $500 and I don't get a dime. What kind of a deal is that?"

"Oliver! Do not speak to me in that tone of voice."

"Why not?" he shouted louder yet, there was a menacing expression on his face; he could be heard throughout the house. "Why not? Tell me that. I've always got the short end of the stick and I'm sick and tired of it. Okey, you can take your money and shove it. I'm getting out of here."

"Oliver, I'll put $500 in the bank against your name. It's not the money. I just don't want you to kill yourself with those machines."

"What I do is none of your business." There were tears, not only of rage, in his eyes. "I never asked to be made a bastard

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but you made me one and the least you could have done about it was to be a mother to me. Okey, play your damn favorite. I won't bother you any more."

He went to the back door. Crying, Ruth held to his arm.

"Forgive me," she said, "forgive me."

"I wouldn't forgive you," he said, "if you was dying. I couldn't. You made me. I won't be back either."

Gene and Dorie heard the shouting. Dorie was frightened and urged Gene to go down and make peace. He told her to be still. They lay in bed in the dark, listening. Not until the motorcycles had roared away did Gene arise.

"Get dressed." He whispered though he was positive that his mother was still in the kitchen. "I'll keep her talking in the kitchen till you creep out the front door."

"Why can't I just stay here as I always do, till she goes to bed?"

"When she's upset she even comes into my room."

This was not true. He only wanted Dorie to leave him alone.

In his turtleneck sweater and tennis shoes, holding a cigarette in fingers that were not entirely steady, his eyebrows very high on his high forehead, he entered the kitchen. Ruth did not take her face from her hands; she was still crying.

At first he did not know what to do. He walked over to the sink to knock the ash from his cigarette. It occurred to him to pat his mother on the shoulder, but he decided against it; had he been in her place he would not have wanted to be patted. He could think of nothing to say. He felt chilly, though it was warm. He put out his cigarette and stood with his hands in his pockets, watching her. It occurred to him he ought to leave her alone. So he went out from the kitchen and walked through the house aimlessly. He found himself oppressed by the house, the dark inward spacious house; but he could not go outside because there was nothing at all out there but dark. He turned on the lights in the living room, but the dark redwood panels seemed to absorb the light. He wished, for the moment, that this room, that all the rooms in the house, were white and geometrical as Dorie wanted them to be. It was not ordered enough for him now; it allowed him to be whatever he chose to be within its own broad limits, and he did not know who he was. He had to go back into the kitchen where his mother was, but he needed an excuse

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to return. He discovered that he was hungry. He returned and ate a ham sandwich.

At last she raised her face to look at him; he was washing his long fingers under the tap. Her eyes were puffy and red, and the puckering about her mouth was replaced by ugly swellings and teeth marks in her lower lip. She looked at him beseeching mercy. In his high-pitched, exact, merciless voice he answered the look.

"Well, you and Oliver seem to have had an argument."

He thought, and no one else in the world would have thought then, that he was being ironical and light; but these bad ironies of his were sharp knives with notched blades.

"He has left home, Gene."

The pathetic are ugly if you close your heart to them.

"Well, he's nearly of age."

"He hates me. Why does he hate me?"

"Oh, well, he's hot-tempered."

"No, he is not. What shall I do?"

Like a man in a well, she clutched at a rope to find it a snake falling back in with her. Gene shrugged.

"Why?" she said. "I taught him what was right and wrong. Why does he choose this?"

"Why didn't you offer him the motorcycle he wants? He'll get one anyway. Do you think it is right to make him feel bad about what he loves so much, just because you don't approve of it? Why indeed?"

"If I had given him what he wanted, I would have been ordering him in a way. Surely it is better to let him be free." It was her last appeal.

"It is worse to subvert," he said.

She looked at him almost blankly.

"Did I not leave you all free to choose?"

"You cut our anchors. That is different."

"Is it not the noblest thing for a man to be free?" she cried out over him.

"Yes," he said and drew in his neck like a turtle, "yes, O God, yes."

"Gene," she said bitterly, "my son is full of hatred for me. He has left me. Why has he done this?"

She called Oliver "my son" as though Gene were her enemy,

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and indeed for that moment he was not her son but her conscious enemy.

"Do you understand what I'm saying? Does it mean anything more than words to you?"

In his highest pitch he answered, "Try to take some nembutal, mother. Sleep is the best restorative."

"Sleep," she said with such bitter scorn as he had never heard from her, "sleep."

She put her face back into her hands, and her shoulders shook.

He went to his room and the 64 squares and 32 men of chess. He set himself to work on trying to find, for the hundredth time, the weakness in his own variation of the Ruy Lopez opening; but the chess could not keep him from hearing his mother's movements. He heard her when she came up the stairs, slowly, heavily; he heard her dial a number and talk in a low voice to someone; he could not tell who it was, but from her voice he guessed it was some friend, some old trusted friend; he wanted to open his door and listen to her conversation but he had not the nerve. She went up to the attic then and moved something heavy; he was racked with curiosity to know what she was doing, what was happening in the long silences between the rustling and shifting noises. Perhaps she was looking at old pictures or reading old letters; he could not imagine what else she could be up to. But at last she came back down to her room and was silent. After an hour he opened his door and looked down the hall; there was still a crack of light under her door. He applied himself to the Ruy Lopez, knowing that he could not sleep until her light was off. But nothing could keep him from listening with all his might for her movements.

For he knew that this was for Ruth a night like two others he could remember. One had been when the first Japanese-Americans had been taken off to the Relocation Camps; the other he remembered from his childhood, the night after Sacco and Vanzetti had been executed. All that night he had slept badly and full of dread, for whenever he had awakened he had heard his mother walking up and down in the house, and sometimes she had cried out in a terrible voice, "What is wrong? What is wrong? What should I have done?"

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The Winter Night's Dream

ROBERT FITZGERALD

The mind in double gloom detained,
The slow dawn, filling up with snow,
Return me to the dream I feigned
Of some dark life-time long ago.

Whether by dream or feigning true,
In a vast city's drift and throb,
Keeping a bare house known to few
I dwelt to windward of a mob;

And would not sortie in the wind,
But when the wind fell, then I cried
In a low voice to my hunted kin-
dred to run for it outside.

And down a causeway hastening home
We came, as from the Peloponnese
Exiles in long cloaks would come
To the sea-lit captain, Pericles,

And saw the marble spaced in air,
Painted against the Ionian,
The Aegean deep of heaven there
In the rational savage city of man—

And, seated high in that place of gold,
The Moirai of the mournful dark
Suburbs where iron traffic rolled
The people tuned to a measured spark.

My heart misgave when I saw this,
And I turned with my fellow shades unseen
From the sweet faithless metropolis
Where in the dream my home had been;

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For the cities were the same.

I wake
To a world of light where cold twigs push
Fingers of snow at the new snow cake,
And crimson from the clear daybreak
The sun flames in a burning bush.

From an Office of St. Francis of Assisi

WILLIAM ALFRED

1. MATINS: THE KISS OF PEACE

There is no faith in me, but treason.
Where is the faith I was to keep?
There is no hope in me, but reason.
Who can not love but weep.

The thunder of your sentence rolls
Within the pigeon's throat.
I hear the judgement cries of souls
In its night-heavy note.

The hackles of the grass stand up
In the green places of my world.
The adder drains me as a cup.
His lip of eloquence is curled . . .

2. LAUDS: BETROTHAL

Still give. I will endure it.
Grace me; I will live.
Love, relentless spirit,
Love, I will forgive.

Wheel the whole notes of morning
Grass-clapped by bells of air,
Sweet reward, sweet warning,
Hawk with the night by the hair.

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3. PRIME: ESPOUSAL

His love came on me like the wind of fright;
I could no more retreat as I retreated.
No door of yours is proof against this light:
I am the first of you to be defeated.

Masters, the treason you accuse me of,
My joy in the town's danger—
There's no disloyalty not based on love;
No man betrays a stranger.

As him who naked fled his hope's caresses
When Christ stood captive to the saving kiss,
All things possess me whom this light possesses,
This savage freedom without armistice.

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The Temple of Memory: Péguy

DONAT O'DONNELL

Les jours son des Sporades et la nuit est la pleine mer
Où naviguait saint Paul.
Péguy: *Le Porche du Mystère de la Deuxième Vertu.*

AS CHILDREN we instinctively apprehend darkness not as an absence of light but as a positive element like air or water, only more far-reaching, dangerous and unknown. Above the crowded lamp-lit streets the night is without end in space, just as to one whom a nightmare jolts out of sleep the dark hours seem stronger than time. Sleep itself, the conquest of the mind by night, gives us in dreams the kinds of freedom which we later use to fill out the names of eternity and infinity. A sound or a light moving on the edge of the part of darkness of which we are conscious—a head lamp or the distant shunting of a train—takes on an urgent significance which just eludes us. Then when we are first at night upon the seashore or on a height within sound of the sea we catch the glimpse again and again, with delight, as if approaching in:

magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

From that border of the dark, marked with such signs, most retreat all their lives until they find it again at last on the far side. A few only, poets or adventurers, spend their lives along the border following it through many different territories and still always through landscape of the same character, between childhood and night. That nocturnal world with its terror and its aggression, its beauty and mystery and cruelty and its profound unreason has also been the object of planned research by explorers based securely on the daylight world. Among these, in whom the rational faculty was dominant, was Freud, and we might also, not without temerity, class Joyce among them. Often a buffoon would affect to dismiss, or to have exhausted, the results

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of such explorations as these. Yet the territory is not yet so fully mapped or its resources so thoroughly known that we can afford to neglect or to sum up too schematically the accounts of those irrational, violent and prejudiced people who live there. Of these accounts one of the most interesting and voluminous is contained in the poetry of Charles Péguy.[1]

II

The difference between those writers who explore the unconscious and those who live in it, like Péguy, is revealed to some extent by different means of using words. The explorers use words as a means of approach and communication, each word (whether of scientific nomenclature or of telescoped association) lying in as close as possible to a supposed meaning. They thus show their confidence in the human will and comprehension, the power of speech and the rational faculties generally. Péguy on the other hand writes as if each individual word were so shifting and unreliable and in general of such little account that it had to be followed up by waves of other words to the same general effect.[2] The *mot juste,* he seems to say, is a will o' the wisp of pedants; truth is so far beyond words that one can only let the words follow it in a great mass as the tide follows the moon. At most one can point it out as one points out a star to a child, with repetitions, gestures, shiftings of ground, exclamations and random references to well-known landmarks; or one can induce a state of mind accessible to truth by hypnotic repetition as in a lullaby or a litany. When rhyme is used it must be used to ex-

[1]Charles Péguy (1872-1914) wrote a number of long religious poems between his conversion in 1908 and his death in action in 1914. The first three of these, *Le Mystère de la Charité de Jeanne d'Arc* (1910), *Le Porche du Mystère de la Deuxième Vertu* (1911), *and Le Mystère des Saints Innocents* (1912) are loosely linked. *La Tapisserie de Sainte Geneviève* (1913), *La Tapisserie de Notre Dame* (1913) and *Eve* (1913) are independent although the Joan of Arc theme runs through the first and third. His tripartite tragedy *Jeanne d'Arc* (1897) although largely in prose is usually classed with his poetry and is included in the only complete edition of his poetical works (*Bibliothèque de la Pléiade,* 1948). His other prose works, not considered here, consisted of many enormous tracts and polemics. There are several full-length studies of him, including a sympathetic and scrupulous one by his contemporary Romain Rolland (*Péguy,* 1947).

[2]The comparison is not between a supposed "prosaic" use of words and a supposed "poetic" use. Poets are probably more apt than anyone else to use words in an exacting and "exploratory" fashion.

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haustion; not alone must all conceivable words ending in a given syllable be pressed, like monsters in a cathedral, into reiterating the same truth, but if the rhymed conjunction of any two words is found especially affecting it may be repeated almost indefinitely. Thus, in *Eve*, his last work, there is, as part of a vast litany, which is in itself only a small part of that extraordinary poem, a series of forty-nine quatrains each of which begins:

Il allait hériter des listes cadastrales

and the final rhyme in each is *cathédrales*. Throughout this poem quatrains differing often by no more than a single word, and that of no special significance, quatrains which any normal writer would have regarded as alternative, succeed each other at fantastic and often intolerable length. Reading some of the sequences one might imagine that the poet was trying to recapture a grace obtained fortuitously. Such an idea suggests itself immediately when in the unfinished poem called *Suite d'Eve*, in a sequence on the change in the world after the birth of Christ, the following stanza occurs:

Dans le même printemps c'est une autre hirondelle
Sur les mêmes chevaux d'autres chevaliers
Dans les mêmes bateaux d'autres bacheliers
Dans le même tourment une amour plus fidèle.

and is immediately followed by forty-eight stanzas on the same plan, containing such variations as

Sur les mêmes chameaux un autre chamelier

and

Et dans la même Auvergne un autre Puy de Dôme.

But there is really nothing to show that Péguy was conscious of any unusual degree of felicity in the stanza quoted—it is not the first of the sequence—and it is much more probable that the long catalogue with its mixture of the lyric and the grotesque is there for its own sake, because the poet wished to insist, to hold the attention fixed on the one subject. The theme—the fact of the change, not its nature or effects—was far too great to be dealt with by a few words, however beautiful, so he holds to it by prolonged

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enumeration around the incessantly repeated words, "the same—another." Where the thing, apprehended or pursued, is outside time or dominates it, the poem endeavors to transcend time or at least to ignore it.[3] It is in the earlier poems however that this technique is most obviously effective. So in the *Mystère de la Charité de Jeanne d'Arc* the nun Madame Gervaise reciting to Joan the story of the life of Jesus proceeds by catalogue and repetition, but with tact:

Il était généralement aimé
Tout le monde l'aimait bien
Jusqu'au jour où il avait commencé sa mission.
Les camarades, les amis, les compagnons, les autorités,
Les citoyens
Les pères et mères
Trouvaient cela très bien
Jusqu'au jour où il avait commencé sa mission
Les camarades trouvaient qu'il était un bon camarade
Les amis un bon ami
Les compagnons un bon compagnon
Pas fier
Les citoyens trouvaient qu'il était un bon citoyen
Les égaux un bon égal
Jusqu'au jour où il avait commencé sa mission.

The enumeration, simple, colloquial, almost gay, with its sense of pleasant humdrum everyday life, is increasingly overshadowed by the cumulative and supernatural message of the repeated lines. But when Madame Gervaise, striving to convince Joan of the completeness of Divine justice and to reconcile in her mind the idea of damnation with that of infinite mercy, comes to the climax in her story, which is the cry of Jesus on the cross, the repetition is weighty and prolonged in sound, marking the prolongation of the cry itself:

Clameur qui sonne encore en toute humanité;
Clameur dont chancela l'Eglise militante;
Où la souffrante aussi connut son propre effroi
Par qui la triomphante éprouva son triomphe

[3]The prolongation also serves a particular musical effect which we shall explore later when we come to discuss *Eve*.

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Clameur qui sonne au coeur de toute humanité
Clameur qui sonne au coeur de toute chrétienté
O clameur culminante, éternelle et volable.

Repetition and enumeration are common oratorical devices, and Péguy does indeed employ them in his polemical prose works just as much as in his verse. In parts of his vast diatribes the reader's only guiding thread is in a single sentence, repeated at intervals of a page or so just as lines like "*La colère des imbéciles remplit le monde*" return in *Les Grande Cimetières sous la Lune* of Bernanos, Péguy's spiritual heir. Yet it is impossible to dismiss Péguy as no more than a rhetorician. The rhetorician, like the scientist, uses words as tools, consciously and confidently, differing from the scientist only in that he aims to communicate not knowledge but a single emotion, which he does not necessarily feel himself. Péguy has certainly his merely rhetorical moments but at his best he is preoccupied with a vision and allows the words suggested by the vision to express it as best they can. His emotions are not simple and in so far as he aims at communicating anything it is not his emotions or even his vision but the capacity of sharing a view of life which is related to them in a complex fashion. We shall try to explore that relationship by following up to the point of intersection the lines of the main ideas which connect and characterize his poetry.

III

The first idea, which is the point of departure and in a sense also the pulse of the whole work, is the idea of suffering. The first *Jeanne d'Arc*, written before Péguy's conversion, begins and ends in pain, both natural and supernatural. In the opening scene Joan speaks to her friend Hauviette of two hungry children, orphans of the war, whom she had fed and who had gone off again "on the hungry road." From contemplation of the suffering caused by the war she is led, not only to desire her own death—"*O que vienne au plus tôt, mon Dieu, ma mort humaine*"—but to offer her own soul for the salvation of the damned:

—O s'il faut pour sauver de la flamme éternelle
Les corps des morts damnés s'affolant de souffrance

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Abandonner mon corps à la flamme éternelle,
Mon Dieu, donnez mon corps à la flamme éternelle.

Her adviser, the nun Madame Gervaise, tells her that this is a blasphemous excess but that she can and should suffer as much as possible for others here on earth: "*nous devons tâcher de toutes nos forces humaines à souffrir du mieux que nous pouvons et jusqu'à la souffrance extrême sans nous tuer jamais, tout ce que nous pouvons de la souffrance humaine.*" None the less Joan still stands undecided between the contemplation of temporal suffering, with the possibility of action, and the paralyzing idea of eternal suffering: "*quand je pense qu'à présent que je vous parle toutes mes paroles vous trouvent occupé à damner des âmes, pardonnez-moi, mon Dieu, si je dis un blasphème; quand je pense à cela, je ne peux plus prier.*" Only when God grants her a sign, answering her long-repeated prayer by the news that the English have raised the siege of Mont Saint Michel, does she accept, and take the road of history. In the next section of the tragedy, *Les Batailles,* we are made aware that her progress is a progress in awareness of suffering and in suffering itself. From the foul insults directed at her by the English in the hour of her glory, through the ignorant brutality of her own soldiers and the Satanic cruelty of a companion-in-arms (Gilles de Rais, the prototype of Bluebeard), she moves to the treachery of her master and her own defeat and capture. In the third part, *Rouen,* we are spared nothing, not even the conversation of the mechanics employed for the torture, not even a last sermon preached to fill Joan with the fear of hell. She who was shown in the beginning as almost in despair at the mere thought of the existence of hell must now face not only the probability of hell for herself but also the responsibility for having damned others.

Faut-il que je m'en aille aux batailles damnées
Avec mes soldats morts, morts et damnés par moi
Faut-il que je m'en aille aux batailles d'en bas?

The idea of damnation, the perpetuation of human suffering, which at the beginning and end of *Jeanne d'Arc* forms a perspective of the Hundred Years War extending into eternity, was for the youthful and compassionate Péguy the great obstacle to belief. "There must," he wrote about this time in one of his

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prose tracts, "be some horrible complicity at the back of the Christian mind, some hideous desire to connive at disease and death."[4] Did he, when he finally entered the Church, become persuaded that these words were altogether untrue? Or did he continue to believe in a complicity with suffering while finding this complicity no longer horrible but perhaps even beautiful? Was the idea of hell, at first a barrier, finally the gateway by which Péguy entered the Church? All we can say definitely is that to the end he remained a poet of suffering and that it was in suffering he felt most joined to the Church, as if his communion were more with the souls in purgatory than with the Church militant on earth. Few poets, even Christian poets, can have laid such stress on pain or have accepted it with such ardor, as of free choice. He not only felt that man on earth was by nature inevitably unhappy but he discerned in himself a natural vocation to suffering. When in the *Prière de Confidence* which he made at the time of his pilgrimage to Chartres (1913) he speaks of his great temptation, it is in these words that he explains his resistance and his renunciation:

Et non point par vertu car nous n'en avons guère
Et non point par devoir car nous ne l'aimons pas
Mais comme un charpentier s'arme de son compas
Par besoin de nous mettre au centre de misère

Et pour bien nous placer dans l'axe de détresse
Et par ce besoin sourd d'être plus malheureux
Et d'aller au plus dur et de souffrir plus creux
Et de prendre le mal dans sa pleine justesse.

IV

We know that this "implacable need to be more unhappy" did not lead Péguy into despair or into a form of stoicism, but on the contrary brought him into a religion of hope—and that it was hope rather than faith or charity which he most celebrated in the Christian religion. The need to suffer and the need to hope together formed the basis of his Catholicism. And, as the way of conversion for each individual is different, so both his "suffering"

[4]Quoted in Rolland's *Péguy*, i.66. A character quoted in the same tract advances another reason for not believing in Christianity—"that it is not true."

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and his "hope" were somewhat different from what Christians normally understand by these ideas. The orthodox believe in mortification of the flesh, not for its own sake but as a way to true happiness; the attitude of Péguy who loved unhappiness for its own sake was no doubt not heretical (for heresy is not a matter of the emotions), but it is peculiar, and perhaps more likely to be regarded as a peculiar sin than as a peculiar form of sanctity.[5] The lineaments under which he envisages the virtue of "hope" seem at first less peculiar and personal, but they are, as we shall see, intimately connected with his conception of suffering.

The starting point of hope for Péguy is the point of greatest suffering and despair—the cry of Christ on the Cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" In both the first *Jeanne d'Arc* and the later *Mystère de la Charité de Jeanne d'Arc*, the nun Madame Gervaise refers to these words in her attempt to lift Joan from her state of despair concerning the damned. Christ's sufferings, she explains, did not avail to save the damned, and it was his despair—Péguy uses the word—at this which made him cry out on the cross:

> *C'est que le Fils de Dieu savait que la souffrance*
> *Du fils de l'homme est vaine à sauver les damnés*
> *Et s'affolant plus qu'eux de la désesperance*
> *Jésus mourant pleura sur les abandonnés.*

Because of this suffering, knowledge and despair of Christ himself over the damned it is vain for Christians to trouble themselves with this question: "why try to save better than the Savior?" It is enough to follow, to listen, to imitate, and to accept the mystery.

The argument is not easy to accept and in the pre-conversion *Jeanne d'Arc*, Joan can hardly be said to accept it. She knows well, she says, that Madame Gervaise is right, that God is right, and that her complaint is evil. Yet "when I think of the damned my soul revolts" and it is not until she receives her sign, the raising of the siege of Mont Saint Michel, that she accepts. Thus, a

[5]This raises another question, in itself peculiar, which I am not casuist enough to resolve: If this morbid disposition of Péguy's was sinful in itself, and if it nevertheless led him to accept Christianity, was the form of his acceptance necessarily heretical, being warped from its origin? Like many other questions which suggest themselves in the study of a Catholic writer, this goes far beyond the competence of the literary critic.

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universal problem, that of reconciling the existence and punishment of evil with the idea of an omnipotent and merciful God receives a purely historical and accidental "solution" which is satisfactory enough for dramatic purposes but otherwise irrelevant. The problem is in fact shelved to be taken up again in the *Mystère de la Charité* and its sequel poems, *Le Porche du Mystère de la Deuxième Vertu* and *Le Mystère des Saints Innocents*. This time to give a generally valid answer, the *Mystère de la Charité* ends with no "sign" but with Joan still unconvinced. Then there is the direction: "Madame Gervaise had left. But she comes back before there is time to lower the curtain." She comes back to deliver the great sermon on hope which is entitled the *Porche du Mystère* and which is the beginning of the answer of the Catholic Péguy to the problem of evil.

La foi que j'aime le mieux, dit Dieu, c'est l'espérance.

Neither Joan nor Madame Gervaise is heard any longer, but only God speaking through the mouth of Madame Gervaise about the virtue of hope, its function in human life and its allies. Hope which is the sap of the tree, which gives life to the whole system—

Elle seule conduira les Vertus et les Mondes—

is compared, first and throughout, to a child and to childhood. She is a little girl, skipping along in the grave procession of Corpus Christi, tugging at a cord of the canopy. She is also the immortal essence of childhood and of birth itself:

Cette naissance
Perpétuelle
Cette enfance
Perpétuelle.

This essential virtue communicates itself to adults through children. The woodcutter can stand the icy wind when he thinks of his children and what he hopes for them. The sickness of the poet's children leads him to confide them to the care of the Blessed Virgin who is herself "all Hope" and thus to hope himself. God himself knows hope through the sins and repentances of his children, as is expressed in the parables of the lost lamb and the

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prodigal son, parables which both reveal the hope of God and keep alive the hope of his children—in a point of pain:

Point de douleur, point de détresse, point d'espérance
Point douloureux, point d'inquiétude
Point de meurtrissure au coeur de l'homme.

When all the other virtues have abandoned the sinner hope alone remains, for it is a disguised virtue and seems to be no more than a fatuous belief that "things will be better tomorrow." This belief thrives on persistent disproof; the rain of misfortune, of the innumerable "bad days", is turned by a perpetual miracle into the living spring of hope which irrigates the fields of France in an especially abundant manner. The most effective agent in this transformation is sleep. God praises sleep and night, the reserve of hope and of being itself:

C'est la nuit qui est continue. C'est la nuit qui est le tissu
Du temps, la réserve d'être

. . . .

C'est le jour qui rompt et le jour n'ouvre là-dessus
Que par de pauvres jours
De souffrance. C'est le jour qui crève et les jours
sont comme des îles dans la mer
Comme des îles interrompues qui interrompent la mer
Mais la mer est continue et ce sont les îles qui ont tort.
O nuit, ma plus belle invention, ma création auguste entre toutes,
Ma plus belle créature. Créature de la plus grande Espérance
Qui donnes le plus de matière à l'Espérance
Qui es l'instrument, qui es la matière même, et la résidence de l'Espérance.

And the poem ends with the gratitude of God to night for having covered the descent from the Cross and the burial of Christ.

The sequel, *Le Mystère des Saints Innocents*, which is a continuation of the monologue, takes up the same themes again, beginning with the promise of hope and of night, and of the two

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efforts of confidence that go with these—prayer and sleep. God does not love "the man who does not sleep," who is identified with the intellectually active:

> *Que sa tête surtout ne marche plus. Elle ne marche que trop, sa tête. Et il croit que c'est du travail que sa tête marche comme ça*
> *Et ses pensées. Non, pour ce qu'il appelle ses pensées.*

Those whom He loves are the uncomplicated and virile, like those of old France, whether saints like Saint Louis or sinners like Joinville. Saint Louis would rather catch leprosy than commit a mortal sin and Joinville would rather commit thirty mortal sins than catch leprosy, but both are free men who can say what they think. It is to obtain this gratuitousness, this capacity of love, that God gave man free will and with it all the capacity of sin and suffering. Leprosy and mortal sin are necessary, for without them the charity of St. Louis and the other virtues of men, which are necessary to the perfection of the glory of God, could not come into being. It is not for man to preoccupy himself with these problems, but to work and pray, and sleep and hope:

> *Que donc celui qui est né pour dormir, dorme.*

And again, as a similitude of hope, the story of a lost child is told; the story of Joseph, which, in the Old Testament, is, by a strange duality, both a first telling of the parable of the prodigal son and a figure of the life of Christ:

> *Il fallait que cela fût joué, dit Dieu. Et deux fois plutôt qu'une*
> *Car il y a dans l'enfant, car il y a dans l'enfance une grâce unique.*

There follows once more the praise of childhood, but this time it takes a new direction, the direction of death. The words *Sinite parvulos venire ad me* repeated in the Office of the Dead for the Burial of a Child, lead on to the Mystery of the Holy Innocents, which gives the poem its title. The 144,000 children massacred by Herod sing, *quasi canticum novum* (in the words of John) before the throne of God and this new hymn is the hymn of childhood:

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C'est un cantique nouveau pour marquer
Cette éternelle nouveauté qu'il y a dans l'enfance
Et qui est le grand secret de ma grâce.

And the poem ends with the picture of the murdered children in Paradise playing hoops with their palms and wreaths of martyrdom.

V

Truth, which is of God, is not accessible to the operation of human "reasoning", which is mere folly. It can be reached only by a process of semiconscious acceptance, called "hope", which occurs when the rational intellect is in some way eclipsed. The salutary eclipse may occur in mere lack of development, as is the case with children and with childlike people, such as medieval barons; or it may occur by sympathy with external darkness, as in sleep, or, as is common, by suffering, which distracts the intellect from its presumption. Universally it must occur in death, with images of which both the poems discussed end. Those are most happy who pass direct to death out of the semiconsciousness of childhood; the rest must use suffering and sleep as best they can, until both converge at last in death.

This is a reduction to rational language of the ideas and image-sequences which animate the *Porche du Mystère* and the *Mystère des Saints Innocents*. It omits nothing that is essential to the rational understanding of Péguy's "theory" of hope, but it necessarily omits all the poetry and the rhetoric, the nonlogical order and the humanity of the poems themselves; it therefore is something closely related to Péguy's thought but different from it as a hydrographic chart is different from the ocean itself with its tides and currents and changing lights. The rational chart immediately suggests, and indeed seems to impose, an interpretation which does not, I think, occur to an unbiased reader of the poetry itself. That interpretation is, of course, a psychoanalytical one: "Hope" is a desire to return to the womb, the experienced state of darkness and unreason. Sleep is a partial return to this state, but the waking self realizes that the original bliss, lost in the pain of birth, can only be attained again through the pain of death. "Hope" is therefore also a cult of suffering and a death-wish. It presents itself in a theological disguise in order to protect

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itself from the discipline of the conscious mind; it also tries by the prestige of theological symbols to weaken and dispel the authority of consciousness.

Such an interpretation is a great deal more than plausible; it is convincing so far as it goes, for it can relate itself at every step, through an undistorted analysis, to the poetry. There would be no need in Péguy's case for the convinced disciple of Freud or Rank to strain meanings or plunge into pedantry; the rational meaning of the text itself makes his argument for him. He could no doubt make his case enormously more subtle than I have done and elaborate it with triumphant references to Péguy's symbolism. None of the constantly recurring water-metaphors—symbols of birth in Freud's system—would escape him and he would find even more satisfactory meaning in Péguy's other poems of the same time—the twin sonnets *L'épave* and *L'urne*—based on the prenatal metaphors of urn-burial and the stow-away, and the somewhat longer poem *Les Sept contre Thèbes* on the fratricidal strife of the two sons of Oedipus. The very nature of Péguy's style, the extraordinary reluctance to budge from any position, the theme-lines recurring like a recurring pain, would serve the argument of the Freudian critic. Nor certainly would each lack the confidence to relate all this to certain known events in Péguy's life—his strong affection for his mother, the early failure of his marriage, and even his early death in action.

It is sufficient at this stage, before going on to discuss Péguy's remaining major poem, *Eve,* to note the great strength of the Freudian case, as based on the logical analysis of the two poems and to note also that the case could be augmented to some extent by detailed examination of Péguy's imagery. The analysis, however, is by far the more formidable contributor to the Freudian argument—and that argument is, in a corresponding degree, related to the poetry by an indirect attachment. What may be lost or omitted by reason of that indirectness is best discussed at a later stage, in relation to Péguy's poetry as a whole.

VI

Eve is Péguy's last complete poem, his longest, and his most ambitious, taking in, in its nineteen hundred rhymed quatrains, not only a great sweep of human history but also all the main articles of belief, the Fall, the Incarnation, the Redemption, the

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Resurrection and the Last Judgment. The speaker is Jesus himself, the Son of Man addressing the mother of mankind:

—O mère ensevelie hors du premier jardin
Vous n'avez plus connu ce climat de la grâce
Et la vasque et la source et la haute terrasse
Et le premier soleil sur le premier matin.

He speaks to her, in the first stanzas, of the lost Paradise and the beauties of a creation "at once chaste and carnal." *Vous n'avez plus connu,* the opening words of a long series of stanzas, emphasize the loss and convey the sense of a once-shared secret. Here the attention is still concentrated on the world before the Fall, but gradually and by a curious and characteristic process it turns toward the state of fallen man. Into the majestic procession of the things "you knew no longer" is slipped a bleakly abstract "all you knew now"—

Vous n'avez plus connu qu'un sévère destin.

The older theme continues dominant for several stanzas; then there is a sequence in which the two themes alternate, then one on the fallen world alone, which leads on to the picture of suffering Eve herself. Here and throughout this poem, Péguy does something which, so far as I can learn, no other poet ever did, probably because no poet less long-winded than Péguy would think of attempting it. That is the use of masses of words in a manner comparable to the use of masses of sound in a symphony, with themes overlapping, accumulating and entering into increasingly complex relations. This is not to say that *Eve* is, in its whole structure and organization, a complete word-symphony. It is, as we shall see, very far from being a harmonious whole, and form was never Péguy's chief preoccupation. The "musical" form in which his ideas present themselves, recur and combine, is not so much a planned structure as a subversion of the "logical" order of narration in favor of simultaneity and direct emotional apprehension. The result is sometimes wearisome and heavy with inverted pedantry, but it can be fresh and strange as it is here at the beginning of *Eve,* where the two opening themes, contrasted but unrelieved, mingle and turn slowly in a sort of pool into which fall like a rock the sudden tender words of Jesus:

Et je vous aime tant mère de notre mère.

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It is now not primarily the Fall that concerns us, but fallen Eve as the archetype of woman. The stanzas describing "things now known" and "things no longer known" continue to reappear, but the new theme or rather two new and alternating themes, of woman suffering and woman managing, are now dominant and are served by the older ones. Jesus speaks with love and compassion of Eve in her suffering, with her back bent under the rage of heaven, and her heart "full of terror on the threshold of new days". She is the "first servant" and "the mother of Our Lady". But she is also, and here he speaks of her with irony, the mistress of the house and holder of the keys. He reminds her of her great primal error in housekeeping:

Je vous vois aujourd'hui fidèle et scrupuleuse
Attentive et sévère et sage désormais.
Mais quand on avait tout, ô grande audacieuse,
Quand on avait toujours on ne comptait jamais.

Woman, in this aspect, is the fundamental rationalist; she attends to her household accounts and when spiritual things come to her attention she tries to tidy them away. She would tidy away God Himself if He came to her house but she forgot—and this is the theme of a long sequence—to tidy away the Cross and the crown of thorns, and the tears of the crucified Christ:

Que n'avez vous alors ô mon âme ô ma mère
Essuyé les deux pleurs jaillis des mêmes yeux.

Yet this sinful, evasive, forgetful and managing woman is the mother of man and knows man's inmost temptations—the meaning of a certain "accent of the choir"—as well as his suffering and her own. She knows what it is to bury children and, especially, what it is to fear for them, to wait dumbly while they are in danger:

Et votre front cerné d'un stupide bandeau
Et l'immobilité de la nuit et des ombres
Et les vagues croulant en énormes décombres
Et vos enfants partis sur un frêle radeau.

Her housekeeping is in part a futile service—picking up the stones that were thrown at the martyrs—but it is also, as here, a vigil of suffering. It is her doom to wait and watch and know

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and still to be helpless on the steps of history. If she is self-important in small tasks it is because she is not allowed to forget the things that are beyond the power of housekeeping. In a strange and almost vengeful manner Jesus reminds her that she, in the person of the holy women, "tidied up" his body after the crucifixion but that there will be a last "tidying-up" which will not be woman's work. Will she, he asks, in a long lyrical question, be able to light the way for her children when they rise from their tombs on the last day, and pass, led by their priests, through their silent villages to Judgment, as once to midnight Mass:

Quand l'homme relevé de la plus vieille tombe
Ecartera la ronce et les fleurs du hallier
Quand il remontera le vétuste escalier
Où le pied du silence à chaque pas retombe.

Quand l'homme reviendra dans son premier village
Chercher son ancien corps parmi ses compagnons
Dans ce modeste enclos où nous accompagnons
Les morts de la paroisse et ceux du voisinage
. . . . . .
Quand ils iront en bande et les curés en tête
Quand ils contempleront le dernier tribunal
Quand ils chemineront tout le long du canal
Comme ils allaient en bande aux jours de grande fête

Quand ils s'avanceront dans l'éternelle nuit
Quand ils auront passé devant le four banal
Et le moulin à vent et le pré communal
Comme ils allaient en bande aux messes de minuit.

The incredible thing is deliberately contrasted with the ordinary humdrum scene in which it is to happen, so that Eve may be reminded that the house she tries to keep cannot be kept. Yet no sooner has Jesus established her helplessness than he turns to emphasize her importance. She is great in her passivity and in her instinctive knowledge "that God's being replenishes itself eternally in its profound might." She knows that man exaggerates everything except his inward fear and unlike "our great scientists who make jam" she knows the power of indefinable forces, of poetry and the sea:

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Et nos tours de vertu et nos efforcements
Ne sont devant les bords du plus ancien cantique
Pas plus que les lambris de vos appartements
Ne sont devant les bords de la mer atlantique.

In her suffering she transmits this knowledge, this instinct and this sense of loss to her children:

Vous avez tant versé sur vos pauvres enfants
Le long ressouvenir des morceaux de la grâce.

She whom the wings of death brushed as she passed along the Dead Sea is the queen of disgrace and at the same time the mother and the memory of humanity:

Vous seule vous savez ô temple de mémoire
Comment on inventa d'entrer dans cette honte.

About this point a remarkable double change begins to come over the poem. Its original subject, Eve, recedes and in a short time disappears altogether while Jesus, the supposed speaker, becomes the subject. These changes are not prepared or announced in any way nor are they carried out altogether consistently. We are made aware suddenly by a casual use of the first person that the speaker is identifying himself with modern men and with sinners but a little further on we find that Jesus himself is speaking of his passion and crucifixion. There is a stretch of nearly two hundred stanzas in which it is difficult to make out who is the speaker and what is the subject. Eve has ceased to be of interest, for Péguy has nothing new to say about her, but she is still present and the poem still addresses her, whether on behalf of Jesus or of humanity, as "mother". It is now at this transitional and chaotic moment, when the old structure has ceased to hold and the new one has not yet appeared, that there comes, altogether surprisingly, the famous and prophetic cry, the beatitude of the soldiers:

—Heureux ceux qui sont morts pour la terre charnelle
Mais pourvu que ce fût dans une juste guerre
Heureux ceux qui sont morts pour quatre coins de terre
Heureux ceux qui sont morts d'une mort solennelle

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Heureux ceux qui sont morts dans les grandes batailles
Couchés dessus le sol à face de Dieu
Heureux ceux qui sont morts sur un dernier haut-lieu
Parmi tout l'appareil des grandes funérailles

Heureux ceux qui sont morts pour des cités charnelles
Car elles sont le corps de la cité de Dieu
Heureux ceux qui sont morts pour leur âtre et leur feu
Et les pauvres honneurs des maisons paternelles

Car elles sont l'image et le commencement
Et le corps et l'essai de la maison de Dieu
Heureux ceux qui sont morts dans cet embrassement
Dans l'étreinte d'honneur et le terrestre aveu.

These lines, the best known of all that Péguy wrote, have been regarded as irrelevant to their context, a mere intrusion into the poet's mind of the external events which were then, in 1913, preparing the first World War. Such a simple interpretation is almost as unjust to Péguy as an oversubtle one would be—as it would be, for example, to ascribe to him the intellectual engineering of a James Joyce, and discern in this passage an intention to point a historical moral by the sudden incursion of a warlike theme at a transitional stage in the poem's development. Nothing, we can be sure, was farther from Péguy's mind than such dialectics, yet his mind had its own patterns and its own system; not a master plan but a coherence of ideas about a powerful emotional persistence. The idea here, far from being irrelevant, is a key one: the interdependence and intermingling of carnal and spiritual things. From the blessing on those who died for carnal cities the poem moves steadily in to its central subject, which is not Eve although it springs from Eve. Jesus—for he is speaking again, for the last time—asks the Father to consider that these fallen men who died for earth were made of earth and asks him to put a handful of earth in the scale of mercy. He asks this for the blood which he himself shed for men and which was their own blood, and for the tree of grace which is rooted in the ground:

Car le surnaturel est lui-même charnel
Et l'arbre de la grâce est raciné profond

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Et plonge dans le sol et cherche jusu'au fond
Et l'arbre de la race est lui-même intemporel.

The poem, twining in itself its various themes, conveys with various images the intertwining of the natural and supernatural until at last it comes to the supreme image and the central mystery:

Et Jésus est le fruit d'un ventre maternel.

In this one line the poem itself comes to fruition. Its subject is and has been, we now know, the greatest which a Christian poet can take, the Incarnation. Jesus is the fruit of a mother's womb. The whole first part concerned a mother, the rest will concern Jesus. This line and those which are near it, at the physical center of the poem, represent the actual birth itself. Thus stated, the scheme appears logical and the balance orthodox. But schematic statements, logic, balance, orthodoxy are little help in dealing with such a poet as Péguy. The mother round whom the first half of the poem moves is not the Blessed Virgin, of whom Péguy had written so movingly in the *Porche du Mystère,* but fallen Eve. The birth of Christ is reached by no temporal sequence but through a defense of the sons of Eve who fall in battle and whose blood is like Christ's blood. There is nothing here to represent the Immaculate Conception and what it means in Catholic theology: the isolation not merely of Christ but of his mother from what is sinful in carnality. Péguy by the order of his poem and by his heavy emphasis on the carnal is conveying, though not logically stating, that Christ is a son of Eve in a sense which the Church denies. This idea contains so much of Péguy that it is better to defer its examination to a later stage. It is enough to note here that Péguy himself must have felt that he was open to attack from the orthodox, for, in the series of stanzas which here dwell on the physical presence of the infant, he finds it necessary to emphasize that eternal life is not "a dry contracted business":

Le réseau qui tremblait sous la lèvre lactée
Battait comme les noeuds d'une souple dentelle
Car la vie éternelle et la sacramentelle
N'est point une entreprise aride et contractée.

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This human child the beating of whose veins is "like a net in the deep sea" and whose eyes are "deeper than the ocean" sleeps in his manger watched by the ox and the ass. To these creatures Péguy devotes some forty stanzas of tender ridicule—these two big bisons, these notaries, these zebus, these ambassadors, these chamberlains, these hairy muzzles, these conservatives, these economists, and so on with a perplexing but endearing gusto. Their dumb presence is compared with the absence and ingratitude of man.

Et ces deux donateurs et ces adorateurs
Gardaient ce fils de Dieu que nous avons perdu.

The child sleeps—the words run through the next long sequence, and the rest of the poem is as if spoken during the child's sleep, in a sort of pause between the old world and the new. Asleep in this vessel of the manger, the Church to be, he is about to begin the tremendous voyage:

Car il allait lancer sur l'énorme Océan
L'impérissable nef ce fragile berceau.

But at the same time that he is to undertake so new a thing, he is to inherit what is very old, the whole complex and intractable ancient world. Here the pause spreads outward from the sleeping child and the Roman Empire stands still for a moment to be catalogued; the city and the provinces; the trireme and the Latin Sea, bitter Zion and a ridiculous thunderbolt, the Western world and the hair of seaweed and of drowned men, the abysses and the promontories, basilicas and huts, and the catalogues themselves, catalogues of woods and saints and kings, of the dead, of loyalties and misery. To this inheritance are added all of history, all the past actions and thoughts of men, which had prepared the world for this sleeping child:

Les éléphants d'Afrique avaient marché pour lui
Du fin fond des déserts jusqu'aux portes de Rome
Et pour lui les soleils d'Israël avaient lui
Du haut du Sinaï jusqu'au fin fond de l'homme.

All the heroes, Hannibal and Caesar, Hercules and Theseus, Darius and Alexander, were his, and his also were the thinkers and their thoughts; or as Péguy says, their dreams:

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Les rêves de Platon avaient marché pour lui
Du cachot de Socrate aux prisons de Sicile
Les soleils idéaux pour lui seul avaient lui
Et pour lui seul chanté le gigantesque Eschyle.

The child will have to remake this world, "as an old woman sews up the pieces of torn trousers," but comparatively little is heard of the remaking. Among the long continuing echoes of the heritage, we hear, at the turn of a stanza, of vice being turned into sin, and Latin into liturgy, and that is almost all.[6] Then unexpectedly, from this lull, the poem rises with a burst of passion into its third and last phase, in much the same way as it moved from Eve to the nativity through the cry:

Heureux ceux qui sont morts pour la terre charnelle.

This time the movement is less sudden and the passion more cumulative. The new theme is, as it seems, stumbled on in the catalogue of the heritage and not at first recognized:

Il allait hériter de nos maîtres avides
De ceux qui nous font dire: Une science est à nous.

Knowing Péguy's hatred for intellectuals and the works of the intellect we are a little surprised at the mild way in which the stanza ends:

Seigneur nous n'avons rien que nos cartables vides
Et l'abdication de nos roides genoux.

This mood of Christian meekness, continuing the tranquil "heritage" passage, lasts for three stanzas. Then he catches sight of the Sorbonne again and is off with a snort:

Ce n'est pas de mémoire et de certificat
Que nous aurons besoin dans le commun désastre.

Here follows what is, even for Péguy, a prodigiously prolonged piece of invective: more than 450 stanzas on the spiritual uselessness and general bankruptcy of educators and the educated. The abuse is monotonous and dogged, each stanza built on the same pattern and repeating the same message, it is not these people who

[6] The change is dwelt on, though not developed, in the unfinished *Suite d'Eve*.

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can save us. These people are by turns defined, symbolized and mocked: geographers, archaelogists, philologists, history professors—the most vilified class of all—bibliographical rats, pedagogues and mystagogues, pens and boxes of notes, weights under glass covers, chemists' bottles, cashiers, haberdashers, hangmen's lackeys—this last a reference to authorities on jurisprudence—sorcerers, urchins, chiefs of protocol, distinguished woodlice, influential centipedes, translators, acrobats, gasmen. We see the damp skin of their pale shaven faces, their obscene lips, their arms full of glossaries and their paternal grimace. These masters of disdain are the warders of our prison; they are also the clumsy "divers in mittens" who cannot reach us under the wave:

Et ce ne sera pas ces plongeurs en mitaines
Qui viendront nous chercher sous la vague profonde.

Half-criminals, half-colonels, they cannot complete the crime or take the fortress. Passion and reason alike are false in them:

Et ce ne sera pas ces faux passionnels
Qui sauront emporter le coeur de la maison
Et ce ne sera pas ces faux rationnels
Qui sauront emporter le coeur de la raison.

This invective is wildly disproportionate in length—for it takes up nearly a quarter of the whole long poem—but it is much more relevant than it appears. It corresponds in the closing part of the poem to the passage in the first part where Jesus rebukes Eve in her aspect of housekeeper and reminds her that there will be a last tidying-up which will not be carried out by her. The first passage stressed the natural poverty and inferiority of the calculating brain. Reason was rebuked in its first and fundamental application: the housekeeping accounts. The second passage attacks more presumptuous and triumphant applications of reason and is correspondingly more vehement. At the same time it carries a greater charge of emotion, for it comes after the description of the nativity and recalls that these flourishing imposters were part of the heritage of Christ. It develops overtly and violently what has hitherto been the more or less concealed motive of the poem: the conflict between reason and, not faith, but something more carnal and less rational, a sort of spiritual instinct.

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Grotesque as the attack sounds it is furiously sincere, and it is accompanied by an undertone of passionate prayer. The professors, the Renans and the Lavisses, are actually contrasted with Christ himself:

Une autre, une autre lèvre un peu plus catholique
Mettra sur nos deux yeux notre baiser de paix
Une main moins aveugle et plus apostolique
Saura nous retrouver sur les hêtres épais.

At intervals the barrage falls silent for a moment, while the true healers—Christ, the Blessed Virgin and, strangely, Saint Peter (not usually a favorite of Péguy)—come to give the kiss of peace among the myrtles or the olive trees. These passages are the most vibrant with emotion that Péguy ever wrote; among the very few in all his work that touch upon a personal torment and a personal renunciation:

Un autre effacera de nos livres de peine
La trace de la ronce et de la fleur de mai
Un autre effacera de l'écorce du chêne
La trace du seul nom que nous ayons aimé.

From which he turns again, with fury heightened by other emotions, upon the history professors. This alternation continues until, at last, the professors are dismissed, and "the others", alone, in the persons of two saints of France, make the concluding set of stanzas. Saint Joan and Saint Genevieve will end the poem which began with Eve. These two saints are contrasted first and last in their deaths: Saint Genevieve, who died among her adoring flock, and Saint Joan, who died amid execration. Péguy handles the contrast with unusual restraint, leaving for long the death of Joan to the imagination:

L'une est morte au milieu des pâles citoyens
Pieusement couchée en un lit de parade.
Soigneusement dressée en une haute estrade
L'autre est morte au milieu des pâles citoyens.

The aged St. Genevieve died among a simple and uncorrupted people, but St. Joan was put to death by the intellectuals of the Church:

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Au milieu des docteurs des savants et des traîtres.

The old Saint has, in heaven, whatever age God wills, but the young Saint's age is absolute and independent of God's will:

Mais l'autre dans le ciel ne peut avoir qu'un âge
Et quand Dieu le voudrait il n'y pourrait rien faire.
Et quand Dieu le voudrait il n'est pas son affaire
Elle est montée au ciel dès son apprentissage.

The young Saint is the Saint of France, and God himself, according to Péguy, does not know whether the love of one's country really must come after the love of God. The old Saint died in January in the snow in the city of Paris, for which history was preparing such a glorious destiny, but the other died in May:

Et l'autre est morte ainsi d'une mort solennelle
Elle n'avait pas passé ses humbles dix-neuf ans
Que de quatre ou cinq mois et sa cendre charnelle
Fut dispersée aux vents.

Thus the whole poem ends with the same theme and even the same rhyme as in the prophetic and apparently irrelevant interjection:

Heureux ceux qui sont morts pour la terre charnelle.

VII

In the case of *Eve* as in the case of the *Porche du Mystère* the summary suggests and sustains a psychoanalytical interpretation. From the opening passage addressed to the mother buried outside the first garden to the final evocations of martyrdom—the invariable ending of all Péguy's major poems—the scheme of the poem with its alternation and interrelation of birth and death conveys the same ideas we have noted before: the return to the womb, the death-wish. It is not necessary to insist on what the summary itself reveals: the duality of the attitude to Eve; the way in which the poet assumes an august mask in order to address the mother and unconsciously drops it when it has served its purpose; the symbolism of the eerily homely passage which describes the body rising from its grave and returning into its village and its house; the cult of suffering carnality; the static description

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of the nativity and of its social matrix, and the violent covering barrage against the conscious mind. The analysis, like an X-ray, shows significant shadows. It reveals, though not without ambiguity, what are certainly important elements in the poet's mind. Yet, noting this much we do not need, I think, to dispel the ambiguity or to erect our interpretation into a hazardously logical structure. The work gives us glimpses of a mind; it is better not to pretend that they are more than glimpses. In any case what is important to us is not so much the exact nature of a psychological pattern, whose salient features we can discern, as the relation of that pattern to the universal. Not every Oedipus is a king and riddle-guesser. We are justified in saying: Péguy wanted to return to the womb, Péguy wanted to die. But we must ask, what then?

The question is, in a sense, answered immediately; the *what* confronts us, the poems themselves as a totality and the main overt subject of the poems, the great all-covering dome which all other subjects and ideas serve to support or ornament, Péguy's idea of the Catholic Church. That idea is of something not abstract but embodied, historical, hereditary and emotional. Péguy never speaks of Christianity (*christianisme*) but always of Christendom (*chrétienté*). The difference between the two ideas, corresponding to a certain difference between Péguy's position and orthodoxy, is well shown in a dialogue in the first *Jeanne d'Arc*. Thomas de Courcelles, the famous Doctor of the Sorbonne who was the most intellectually eminent of all Joan's judges, gives her the orthodox definition of the Church:

> THOMAS: The Church is the communion of the faithful who follow the true religion instituted by Our Lord Jesus Christ under the authority of their legitimate pastors.
>
> JOAN: I don't understand everything that you say, master.
>
> THOMAS: I don't think you could get a better explanation, Joan.
>
> JOAN: Then the Church, as you call it, is Christendom?
>
> THOMAS: No, Joan: the two words don't mean quite the same thing.
>
> JOAN: Then I don't understand.

This dialogue was written before Péguy's conversion, but there is no evidence anywhere in his work to show that he ever made any real distinction between the Church militant and Christendom, or attached any great importance to the authority of legiti-

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mate pastors. His famous and sometimes mistranslated saying: "The sinner is at the very heart of Christendom," gives the true orientation of his system. The most important personal elements of Christendom are ordinary laymen (sinners) and the saints, and in Christendom spiritual loyalty and historical loyalties are inextricably mingled. God himself, as we have seen, does not know whether patriotism should really be put below Charity. St. Joan, round whom the greater part of Péguy's work revolves, has the double character of saint and patriot and, as such, a doubly sacred vessel of faith and history, she was destroyed by the intellectuals of the Sorbonne who were also the Doctors of the Church. Catholicism for Péguy is the religion which the women of France have handed down, in carnal cities for which it is good to die. He accepts it, not as an antique curiosity or a reliquary of symbols, but as something which is true, yet he accepts other beliefs not less fervently. His dark and atavistic mind, contemptuous of any merely rational difficulties, assimilates together and fuses into poetry all the great traditional beliefs of his ancestors. Dreyfusard, nationalist, Catholic, he felt the blood of kings and saints and revolutionaries to be one blood, one common passion. The Christian religion is the highest expression of this common passion which forms the essence of historic France and is the only element within which Péguy could live. One cannot imagine Péguy interesting himself in the work of English converts or subscribing to the African mission. What he believed in was the religion of his own people, the religion which once had covered them all, and to which, at least in a submerged part of themselves, they all still belonged. In fact, its state of submersion, of being apparently recessive and no longer acceptable to the rationalizers, made it easier for him to make his own personal adaptation, identifying Christianity with the truth of the instincts and the secret ancestral alliances of the mind. Carnal and spiritual enter a closer relation than the orthodox allow; the soul and what the post-Freudian world calls "the unconscious" are one. Christ is the son of Eve.

If all this, so stated, sounds more Germanic than French it is only partly because the Germans are more inclined than others to try to describe in prose the things that poetry communicates. It seems Germanic because it uncovers a stratum long laid bare in

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Germany and cropping out in remote places like Ireland, but usually deeply hidden in countries with relatively comfortable histories. Comfort and intellectuality, suffering and the ancestral gods have historically gone in pairs. In a poet like Péguy a personal suffering and withdrawal joins and expresses collective movements of the same character. A country, already once defeated, bracing itself for the second imminent shock, found in him a choral poet expressing, on different levels, the sweetness of death, the weariness of suffering, the will to fight and also that which called to be fought for, the inward essence and the spiritual frontiers of France. In a deeper and more abiding sense he expressed the great latent community of emotion which exists in a nation or a Church, or nation and Church together, and which can so easily blow aside the reason of the most rational peoples. That community, that mass of hereditary feeling, normally for the individual a distant sound, was in 1914 about to become a roaring storm-tossed sea. It was Péguy's peculiar vocation to catch and turn to words the sound of that sea in its apparent peace and as it grew to anger. Like Victor Hugo, whom he venerated and whose oceanic speech he made his own, he became a "sonorous echo" of history, but the sound he echoed came from a deeper level, more muffled and more ominous. Once, his somnambulism was capable of instigating murder, when he called for the blood of Jean Jaurès, whose crazy assassin was to clear the way for war. Always, he heard and made others hear:

Ancestral voices prophesying war.

Yet the temple on the dark seashore was not a mere barbaric temple of war. It was a temple of memory, both of a man's birth and death and of the long history of Western Christendom. In that sacred place of power and poetry one cannot tell where the personal joins the collective; one only knows that it does join it and that no "explanation" which is purely personal or purely collective can hold. The history which was present so intensely in the romantic Péguy certainly moved also, and not merely by external compulsion, those who died with him on the Marne. We may guess that his case was not the only one in which history took the form of a kind of poetry, touching the sunken Faith, the fringe of darkness and the sea.

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A Dialogue with W. H. Auden

HOWARD GRIFFIN

The room was large, filled with haphazard furniture and the twelve volumes of an unabridged Oxford dictionary. After fixing coffee, Auden began talking about the nature of propaganda during wartime. I mentioned that in the army I had been disturbed by the claim, made by Americans, that the Japanese killed their own wounded.

AUDEN: That is a practice always attributed to the other side. Propaganda, like the lying of children, is due to fear and boredom.

GRIFFIN: But why is this considered good propaganda?

A.: The reason that such statements have great psychological effect is that they change what was an abstract relation into a personal relation. In war the relation between killer and killed is not a personal relation: each sees in the other not a person but the surrogate for an enemy force, not necessarily an armed surrogate. Furthermore, if the enemy is *not seen* (as is most often the case in modern war), the possibility of any sense of personal relation is decreased. In murder there must be intention to kill and a personal relation. In the case of the killing of one's wounded a personal relation is created: these men are not distant representatives of an enemy force.

One must distinguish between this and the execution of war prisoners. In the case of the attempted suicide of the Japanese war minister, a relation was brought in on a peculiarly personal plane. I am thinking of General Tojo, who was saved from death by the donation of the blood of an American Army sergeant. Science has introduced a new kind of relation that has profound mystical effect on civilians.

G.: How would you classify the Nürnberg Trials?

A.: Inevitably a personal relation was introduced. The accused were allowed to express their wills. The war trials were unique because they created a new rapprochement between the killing in war which is impersonal and the execution of killers who have

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been personally convicted. . . . But to return to our starting point—the killing of one's wounded and of prisoners. The reason why the refusal of quarter arouses indignation among civilians is that the human will is directly involved. Why do people enjoy detective stories?

G.: Because there is a personal relation between killer and killed?

A.: Exactly. In a detective story you must have a murder; no other crime will do. Unless it is a murder, you don't care to find out who did it. Why in a detective story does one want to discover the criminal?

G.: Perhaps because in other offenses the law acts on behalf of the injured party, but in a personal crime like murder the community becomes a substitute for the victim and you, as an individual part, feel involved.

A.: Yes. Connected with this is the great need of people who murder to confess. How does one feel at the end of the story when the murderer is caught? It is not satisfactory if the murderer goes mad or commits suicide. If he goes mad, he cannot ask for forgiveness: for this reason those who regarded the Nürnberg Trials as a blood feud felt cheated when Hess was let off. If the murderer commits suicide he refuses to be forgiven. An example of this: Lady Macbeth.

G.: And this was the reason many felt cheated when Goering outwitted his jailers?

A.: Yes, they wanted the death in itself. I was glad when I heard about his suicide. It showed up the stupidity of the American officers. Even a lieutenant-colonel should know that an X-ray must be taken of a prisoner to see if he has poison hidden in his rectum.

Americans regarded the death of Hitler with feelings that are more properly aroused by the detective story or the epic poem.

G.: Yes, you see the detective part of it in Trevor-Roper's book.

A.: The Siegfried part comes out in the attitude of the people. Those who do not believe that Hitler really died look upon him as an epic hero of whom the legend is that he is not dead, that he will return to save his country. This belief survives in England in regard to King Arthur.

G.: According to your distinction between war and murder,

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I would infer that a war cannot be waged unless personal antagonism is built up on the emotional level, and on the actual plane the personal relation minimized?

A.: That is right. There was much less hand to hand combat in this war than in the last. The distances of aerial warfare have introduced a new element. When bombs are dropped from a great height, the act of killing becomes an *acte gratuit*. One bomb may drop on an orphan asylum and kill two or three thousand children. A man would feel differently if he were ordered to machine-gun an equal number of children. There was considerable gratuitousness in the dropping of bombs—among the British particularly.

G.: But still the personal relation in the last war was not completely destroyed?

A.: By no means. In occupied countries, for instance, it recurs. Although a nonfraternization policy tries to cope with troubles brought about by the contiguity of conquered and conqueror, the personal relation inevitably creeps in. . . . The occupied *have something* which the occupiers want—not only material things or sexual pleasure but good will. They have destroyed this, or tried to. Nevertheless they desire profoundly, perhaps unconsciously, to be forgiven. Conquered and conqueror know that restitution is impossible and yet—whether they know it or not—the conqueror desires to offer restitution. He is both an exile and a killer; he wants to be regarded as a human being.

G.: That is true. . . . When a prisoner of war escapes from confinement in an enemy country, an interesting situation occurs. Say such a person is pursued and seeks refuge in some house and is taken in.

A.: It is interesting because such a story concerns the conflict between the personal and the political will.

G.: The film *Grand Illusion* beautifully illustrated this conflict. The French prisoner who has been separated from his outfit takes refuge in a German house. There is an episode where he begins to fall in love with the woman of the house, whom he fears will betray him. Although they live together for a time happily, at the end he has not even learned to say "*blaue augen*". And when they part, she corrects his pronunciation.

A.: In *The Merchant of Venice* you find another illustration. The society depicted here is quite democratic . . . the people are

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free and the freedom involves the most enormous obligations on the part of those who love. Their feelings for their friends transcend all family, racial or national loyalties. These people would agree with E. M. Forster's remark: "If I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend, I hope I'd have the guts to betray my country" . . . I believe that what people really should aspire to is a beneficent anationality.

G.: Don't you think that patriotism and love of country are, for the most part, "home front sentiments"?

A.: Oh yes, but one must distinguish between patriotism and love of one's native soil. It is only in small communities—such as the Greek republics or the Swiss cantons—where they coincide. A man's attachment to the soil must tend toward narrowness. It is the most fully developed nations who have outgrown this love of the soil for they have learned to be unafraid of the unknown. There resides in some men—perhaps latently in all—a social longing, a desire to join with other men to form associations . . . .

G.: In unofficial records of the war you find occasions when the personal relation negates the political. The sympathy of percussion. In terms of experience and general feeling, the soldier may feel he has more in common with the enemy soldier than with people back home. Instances occur when the personal breaks through: Christmas truces, cigarettes being flung across the lines, cease-fires to take care of the wounded, etc. Also, in stories concerning the first World War one found another situation which brought about personal understanding: one soldier is forced to confront a man he has fatally wounded and compelled to watch that man die. As he dies, the other sees him become, not the hated enemy, but a human being.

A.: The situation of Wilfred Owen's *Strange Meeting*.

G.: The personal may be brought in through the younger generation, as you do with the boy and girl in *On the Frontier*.

A.: But here another difficulty occurs—a difficulty not amenable to change, and that is: the divorce of understanding and experience between generations. From experience, the older generation has understanding. Whereas the younger generation has a desire for experience. The frivolity of art is that it cannot have much effect in changing people. No matter how utterly convincing, didactic art cannot succeed in changing society. The reason of men can be swayed, it is true, but men are essentially

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unreasonable. The best definition of man is the ungrateful biped. Men are ungrateful, mischievous; they are not—for the most part—artists or artisans.

G.: You mean art, like law, is always trying to catch up with life?

A.: Yes, and vainly. A young person cannot be deterred from participating in war by reading a book such as *All Quiet,* say, or Sassoon's *Sherston's Progress,* for along with the sordidness and terror, he finds or thinks he finds portrayal of acts of heroism and comradeship. Not only is this true, but if a young person reads a convincing anti-war book, such as David Jones's *In Parenthesis,* he will dismiss it when the next war comes along by saying, "Oh, that was true about World War One or World War Two. But *this* is a different war. World War One was an imperialist war. This is an ideologic war." Or for the next war they will have another term. Perhaps "vindicated" or "intuitive" or "magnanimous". That is one of the dangers of language: it can always think of reasons. To the young people each war is "their war" and in a sense they're right . . . it is their war in the sense that they seize it. Men by their nature are inflammable. God knows *The Iliad* and *The Trojan Women* are adequately anti-war. If people had been going to change, they would have started a long time ago.

G.: To go back to the matter of the personal relation negating the political. . . . For those who are "immersed in the destructive element", that is, soldiers themselves, the personal always outweighs the political. For civilians, however, the opposite is true.

A.: Quite. Whenever I talk about this, I think of my friend, Ross More, Second Army, Canadian Third Division. He was in the fighting at Caen and Bayeux. He couldn't fire a gun but he was sent out in the push that was made to capture Bayeux. He remembered to take a rug with him, because he didn't want to dirty his uniform, and he took a book. So sure enough he was wounded. He put down his rug and read until the bearers came and got him.

G.: One sees quite clearly this dichotomy between the personal and the political relation in *Macbeth.*

A.: Yes, it is made clear at the very beginning of the play. The execution of the treacherous thane of Cawdor is different from the killing of Duncan. Duncan says:

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Is execution done on Cawdor? Are not
Those in commission yet return'd?

Malcolm answers that Cawdor confessed and repented and has been killed. Then Duncan:

There's no art
To find the mind's construction in the face.

This remark shows there is no personal relation involved here. It is a political type of death, and Cawdor himself has wanted to give restitution. In contrast to this, Shakespeare gives us the killing in war of young Siward. But in regard to the death of Banquo Shakespeare carefully makes clear the personal relations on the part of Macbeth and the two murderers who are not merely instruments but are animated by enmity and spite.

G.: Toward the end of the play one is aware of a great need on Macbeth's part to establish some relation to others if only through violence.

A.: Yes, he has been guilty of murder; in the case of Lady Macduff it is almost a gratuitous killing. In murder, the murderer is unrelated to the injured party and therefore there can be no restitution or forgiveness. Why are murderers often said to see ghosts? It is because in a sense the murderer desires not to be left alone with the consciousness of crime; it is an attempt to have relation with the other. In any other injury, you can always think of the injured being in the world, and, if you change your mind, you can ask for forgiveness.

G.: I think this passage is one of the keys of the play:

But let the frame of things disjoint, both the worlds suffer,
Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep
In the affliction of these terrible dreams
That shake us nightly, better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless ecstasy.

A.: Macbeth and his wife tried to be murderers without malice and therefore they become isolated from society because of crime. It is a case of treachery within the group. Macbeth cannot sleep. Neither can he forget because there is no one else to remember. Unable to enter the childish world of wish and dream (because

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the wish has become a fact) he must remain in the present. The past is related only to him and to no other. . . . "Better be with the dead. . . ."

G.: The latter part of the play is full of a portentous and weary atmosphere. . . .

A.: Yes, Macbeth begins to be sick of the sun. He thinks of the situations when the persons he killed were not to him *persons.* He desires that now. Why doesn't he commit suicide? In the last analysis he wants justice; he wants relation to his fellow men from whom he is cut off. If he commits suicide he denies relation. If he is killed, then in that act relation is restored.

G.: Lady Macbeth is believed to have committed suicide.

A.: Because she has incited the trouble. She is more guilty in intention than Macbeth. Being more lonely than her husband, she refuses a relation. Since she has no direct relation with the victim, no way exists by which she can be reconciled. The reason Macbeth in the third act calls up Banquo's ghost is precisely that it is not Banquo, that it is not conscious, that no relation is possible.

Auden spoke of books about World War I, mentioning In Parenthesis *as one of the best and commenting on* Sherston's Progress:

A.: Sassoon's book is interesting because he gives an idea of the officer-ordinary soldier relation in the British army. One difference exists between the British and the American army. The British officer usually has a better education; he feels more responsibility for his men, whereas the American officer is ordinarily less intelligent than the enlisted man. He is afraid this will be shown up and tries to hide it by terrific arrogance. American officers incessantly quibble about rank and promotion. In the British army, one finds plenty of bitching about the food, quarters, etc. but less about rank.

G.: I wonder about this superior sense of responsibility. Do you think an analogous responsibility exists on the part of the English upper classes in regard to the lower strata?

A.: To a certain extent. The attitude of a squire to those who work his land is parallel. England has a tradition of *noblesse oblige.*

G.: It is mostly the *noblesse* who believe in that tradition.

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A.: A good British army officer does feel a definite sense of obligation toward his men. You see it in the Sassoon book.

G.: Yes, but I think Sassoon was an exception. His relation with his servant (a private) was very close and without friction. But I can imagine that such a relation might many times have been anything but that.

A.: As an officer Sassoon regarded his company as a family and himself as the head of it.

G.: There is a tendency to say "the officers and the men"; the men are conceived as a homogeneous unit, as a lump, not as a group of individuals with their rights.

A.: In this connection the definition of "gentleman" is interesting. According to English law a gentleman is a "respectable man who engages in no occupation or profession for gain." In time of war an English gentleman automatically becomes an officer. By knowing the right people and coming from the correct stratum of society things are made quite easy for such a person. He has the angels on his side to begin with: you see that with Sassoon. In his case he did not misuse his advantages.

G.: In a sense I think the British army is more provincial than the American.

A.: Why?

G.: I noticed that in Japan the GI became a sightseer. But Tommy Atkins is never a sightseer.

A.: Does this mean he is more provincial?

G.: Wherever he goes the Britisher projects his world. A clearing in the jungle allows him to set up a bridge table. He brings England with him. Despite his narrowness, I think the American is more resilient and open to outside influences. He is sympathetically curious about other people. Set down in some outpost the Tommy spends his leisure imagining what's going on back in Sussex. Given the chance to choose between a trip to Kashmir, say, and a get-together with chaps from his part of Sussex, the Tommy will choose the latter.

A.: This business of being detached depends largely on psychic factors. I am, I suppose, something of a *déraciné* and with me it is mostly a matter of temperament. How strongly one identifies oneself with the land depends, too, on how soon one falls into a family pattern. . . .

G.: You mentioned *Strange Meeting*. Do you think any poet has been produced by the last war comparable to Owen?

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A.: No. It is ironical that his stuff written about one war served as the only adequate commentary on the next, even though the method of fighting was outmoded in the interim. Due to the change in type of warfare, almost no good poetry has come out of this war. I doubt if the sort of mind required for a combat pilot or a bombardier is capable of producing good poetry.

G.: It is very difficult to write about the actual experience of fighting.

A. Yes. I think the best account of a battle was given by Captain Strahan. He saw action at Cherbourg and Bastogne. After being wounded, he was sent back to England. When a reporter asked him what the Battle of Bastogne was like he said, "Oh, my dear fellow, *the noise . . . and the people!*"

G.: What amazes me in so many of your poems, even your very early poems, is the way you foretold, or foreshadowed, so many later developments. You saw the war coming and you spoke about it clearly.

A.: Oh, yes, prophecies, but one doesn't mean them really. It's as if one said, "It will rain tomorrow." Perhaps as it happens, it does, but one only said it because it rhymed with sorrow.

G.: In connection with *The Ascent of F6*, I would like to ask you a question about the protagonist. Was that figure based on Colonel Lawrence?

A.: Yes. The ascent of the mountain is a symbol of the *geste*, it can also be a symbol of the act of aggression.

G.: Then you look on Lawrence definitely as a jingoist?

A.: Oh no, he was surely in sympathy with the Arabs.

G.: Yes, but only up to a point. He concurred with England's imperialist policies. Also, he regarded war as a game, a sport—

A.: There is a difference between regarding war as a sport and being jingoistic. With the business of unconditional surrender, modern warfare cannot be regarded as a game. Not since the eighteenth century has it really been possible to compare war to a game. During wars like the last two, officers and RA men wanted the fighting to be over so they could get back to "real soldiering." They resented the intrusion of civilians into the forces, despite the fact that they usually made superior soldiers. Only to fighter pilots war might appear as a game because there one has the business of individual scoring.

G.: You believe, don't you, that there were real ideologic factors involved in the last war?

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A.: Yes, in regard to Germany. In regard to Japan, however, it was imperialistic. But most people really believed that Germany was wrong and should be stopped. . . .

All Hitler's actions cannot be explained logically. That is why Chamberlain failed at Munich. Since he was a typical business man, he judged Hitler from a practical point of view. Because Hitler had most of Europe at his feet, Chamberlain could not see how he could want more. There is a perversity in people that makes it unwise to try to explain all their actions in terms of economic advantage. How artificial a basis of society money is can be seen in the dilemma of the Spanish colonists who, when they came to this country, could not get the Indians to do enough work for them. They would work to get just enough for subsistence. Beyond that they would not work because it interfered with their leisure. . . .

. . . Wars are fought over geographic frontiers; there is no particular reason why they should be. It is a convention that makes of an arbitrary line a moral thing. It says, for instance, that if you cross from one zone to another you are punishable. The idea of national sovereignty confirms this fictional belief in strict boundaries. The concept of national sovereignty can be indirectly attacked by recommending the abolition of passport control and immigration laws. This would be a good thing. If passports were junked and a certain country declared war, one could just leave the country. Consequently governments would have to make it desirable for people to live within their jurisdiction.

G.: But wouldn't there be overconcentrations, then, in attractive areas?

A.: Things would even themselves out. One can trust the great inertia of the human race.

G.: It might create a vast floating population.

A.: That would be all right, too. Let people move around. Of course, most men are much too lazy to shop around for a country to live in. All this fuss over world government. It seems so simple to me. You just have to throw all passports in the sea, and tax incomes at the source.

G.: I'd like to go back to a remark you made earlier. You said that you thought the British officer quibbled less about rank than the American officer. How would you compare the German and the American officer?

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A.: The German exercised more initiative and original thinking than his British or American counterpart. The cream of the American army were the sergeants. The officers I met talked exactly like big wheels at an NAM meeting. The difference between the English and the Germans is shown in that story about the rowing meet. In preparation the Germans performed feats of training and spent considerable time, but the English arrived on the scene half drunk and in confusion. The event commenced and the Germans at first outdistanced their opponents but toward the end of the contest while the English were going under a bridge, someone spat on them. At this time they became so mad that they rowed terrifically and won the race.

Q.: The English think it is bad form to be too serious.

A.: My brother is a mountain climber; he is a very good one and has been on many expeditions. But he used to complain about the attitude of the Germans. All they think about is getting to the top.

G.: Many Americans waxed indignant over the race-superiority myths of the Germans, yet were we to be honest, we would have to admit the existence here of a master and a slave race.

A.: There is more real racism in this country than there was in Germany at the height of Goebbels' power. The feeling against the Jew is not primarily economic. The Jews think Christians are too frivolous; the Christians think Jews are too serious—but serious about the wrong things. Christians feel about Jews the way Englishmen do about the Scotch. The Scotch work too hard; they're clannish, industrious, too religious and they think they're the apple of God's eye. They seldom have a sense of humor.

G.: Or you might use as a parallel the way the English feel about the Irish?

A.: No, that is different. We feel that the Irish are right—but they talk too much about it. Many Jews go to Eton; nothing is thought of that. We had a Jewish prime minister; that could not happen here. In an English school, scholars would be divided as to whether their parents were in trade or in the professions. The Jewish persons in England, and there are many, have been well assimilated. The anti-Negro feeling in America, however, is mainly economic. When you talk to one of the more rabid Southerners you find that what he wants to do is to keep the

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Negro in his place. But when you talk to an anti-Semite you find he wants the Jew not to *be*. It is the difference between exploitation and annihilation. . . .

G.: Do you think one's early education should place much emphasis on forms and social manners?

A.: In a capitalist democracy too little attention is paid to manners. People are born serious, selfish and honest. Through suffering, they must learn to become frivolous and insincere. In order that we may not take ourselves as seriously as a baby does, we have to learn to be serious about other people. First of all, we are trained not to claim the attention of others; when we do, we have to deserve it. In social intercourse when we speak we have a duty to be funny and we mustn't talk too long. Lack of convention leaves any society at the mercy of its most selfish member. In the absence of a code of manners, it is extremely difficult to know what relations are developing between you and the people you meet. How problematical it is at a cocktail party where people you have never met before behave as if they knew you very well! If a convention of social action exists, however, slight departures from it tell you how you are changing in relation with someone else. We have to remember that we cannot trust our own feelings and so a code of behavior tides us over. We have to bear in mind that we are a great deal less interested in others than we like to admit. In manners we pretend to be concerned about people we never wish to see again.

G.: The dramatic poet, I think, is guilty of a certain type of dishonesty.

A.: He is honest with himself and deceives others. . . . But God knows one can't have honesty in human relationships! The most dishonest people are those who are unaware they are acting. To be honest with oneself means to know oneself an actor, not to take oneself too seriously. You can, therefore, be honest with yourself and deceive others. Kierkegaard, for instance. You can be honest with others and deceive yourself. Don Quixote takes himself too seriously—particularly at first. That is why he needs Sancho Panza—the reality-principle. Terrible things happen to Don Quixote because he refuses to know he is acting; but at last he learns to forgive. He tries to do good, to help

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people and just gets in their way. There is a third type of dishonesty—one can be dishonest altogether. Most persons in modern society are honest—that is, frank—with others and deceive themselves. But a convention of complete frankness amounts to nothing really but a form of dishonesty.

Q.: Whom would you cite as an example of the third type of complete dishonesty?

A.: Rousseau. With his theories of the Golden Age and the General Will he was, I think, responsible for totalitarianism in its modern form. His ideas of the deification of the State and Civil Religion became the weapons of the dictators. According to Rousseau, the noble savage is born good and free, becomes corrupted by institutions—

G.: And you believe that some of the blame should be placed on man himself?

A.: Absolutely. Since it is he who makes the institutions. I think that the first step toward the realization of a universal good society is a belief in the fall of man.

G.: Would you explain that?

A.: The Christian story of the Fall teaches that no man is really much better than any other. Which does not, however, hinder you from choosing between two things in particular cases, say, between two men up for office, and deciding A is better suited than B, but it does act as a safeguard against idolizing or entrenching any particular man.

G.: Do you believe that power inevitably corrupts?

A.: Politics brings out different gifts in a man than other fields do. A surgeon, for instance, has power over other lives yet is not corrupted by it. A leader may start out with humanitarian feelings, yet when he gets to the top he is corrupted by his position. All totalitarian societies start out as utopias. . . .

I believe pretty much in the platonic idea of inborn traits. Not that, of course, I have faith in a static sort of society. But there is an extreme slipperiness about a capitalist democracy that is not good. Here there are thousands of persons desiring to be that for which they have no talent, longing to be movie stars, for instance. They'd be happier staying home but they do not realize this. A society should have just enough flexibility for each man to move around and find his right spot. Most people in America

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do not know what they have a talent for: they have become A Wish. Also, they are not willing really to work and to concentrate. Americans, you know, are not efficient. If you have ever been to a faculty meeting you know that. They have an amount of business to do that could be done in an hour and they waste the whole afternoon doing it, because if they finish it earlier, what are they going to do with the time? The English would accomplish just as much in half the time.

G.: Another illustration of your point, I think, is the American love of gadgets. Americans use gadgets to save time which is spent in the operation of other time-saving gadgets. The device comes to be a time-filler in itself. It creates leisure but Americans are embarrassed by leisure.

A.: Or else they think it wicked.

G.: We have strayed from our starting point. . . .

A.: Yes, to go back to the use of power. . . . I think it might be a good idea if political jobs were granted by lot or by universal regulation like jury duty. Everyone should be made to serve at some time. It would be a nuisance but it would be good.

G.: What would you say about the infliction of punishment by lot? Judge Lindsey claimed that every year a lottery should be held to decide who should go to prison and who should not. He said that the result would be as impartial as our present justice and would also give each an opportunity to be punished and reformed as a miserable sinner. God would keep an eye on the matter to see that those who had not drawn a bad lot would get what they deserved.

A.: We cannot rely on God to that extent. He nods. As for its being as impartial as our present justice, that's probably true. It is true that everyone has done wrong things and it does seem unfair to make individuals expiators for society. But one must remember that a certain amount of punishment acts as a deterrent. Anyway that is only an external attack on what is essentially an inward problem. It places—as did Rousseau—too large a blame on the institution. The Christian theologians are more nearly right when they blame man himself for his pride and his refusal to acept suffering. Man is perverse to the extent that he is capable of enjoying the toothache; he may take pleasure in not loving his neighbor.

G.: Would you agree that one of the errors of psychoanalysis

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is that it places too great an emphasis on knowledge as a corrective of behavior?

A.: Yes. Men are not deterred from doing a particular act, though they know it is harmful to society or to themselves. In *Notes from Underground* Dostoyevsky gives the classic illustration of this. Surely, the psychiatrist proves to me that my act is unsocial; still I choose it to show my autonomy. Sociologists and psychiatrists both treat man as if he were a logical entity.

G.: Do you think they classify people too neatly?

A.: For the most part they let you classify yourself. Why are people neurotic? —Because they refuse to accept suffering. Psychiatrists err in several directions: too often they assume they can change people. . . . Freud said he wasn't interested in changing people. In your dealings with psychiatrists, you may find yourself in a false situation. You go to one of them attracted by his claim to free you, to unchain you from your fears and obsessions, but after talking to him for a while you discover that he himself is not free: he is ruled by an interest in money.

G.: Do you believe that psychiatry should be used in the treatment of criminals?

A.: Very little. If a murderer knows that all that will happen to him is a few sessions with a psychiatrist, why he'll be murdering people right and left.

How would the psychiatrist attack the problem? If they say to the thief: Oh you poor boy, your mother did not love you or she loved you too much and that is why you steal, he's going to go right on stealing.

G.: True, but there are certain crimes—infanticide, parricide, etc.—which can be clarified by psychiatric research.

A.: A great deal depends, too, on the periphery in which an offense is performed. If I see an expensive book in a store, I may steal it. I may see the same book in a friend's house and not be tempted for two reasons: (1) I know he'll miss it and suspect me, (2) I can see very clearly the hurt it will give him.

G.: In the South Sea Islands they say it is possible to maintain a peaceable life with the minimum of taboos.

A.: Manifestly because of the restriction of the periphery. To give a different example: one needs more taboos in a city than in a family. In a family the withdrawal of affection may form sufficient punishment. But in a city no. Say a thief is caught.

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One cannot punish his crime by the withdrawal of affection, that in fact may have been its cause.

G.: I get the impression that you think psychiatrists are too dictatorial in their methods?

A.: Some of them are power-maniacs. About half of them are quacks. They think they have all the answers. I would much rather have the police in charge than psychiatrists. The police can always be bribed. The Chinese realize that. The poor people there buy the policeman's favors by flattering him, pulling him in the house, giving him a cup of tea, etc. . . . They believe it is their duty to corrupt the policeman by sending him gifts and doing services for him. They know that no policeman in the world can resist such attention. Even in a democracy the law enforcement is a dangerous profession; in dealing with crooks you become like them.

G.: Do you believe that the universal state should be preponderantly *Polizei* or *laisser faire?*

A.: It must not be *Polizei.* The larger the government, the more scattered the people, then the less can force be relied on. Fouché was responsible for the origin of the police-state. In order to see how amazingly it operated one has to go back to the First Empire and read about those times. It makes fascinating reading. Fouché started out as a Catholic, reacted violently and became an atheist. His life was a net of intrigue and he died immensely rich. He was opportunistic but never the tool of others. The direct descendant of his secret police exists in all totalitarian countries. . . . At first Napoleon and Fouché worked hand in glove. Not really surprising. Essentially Napoleon was an opportunist, a Machiavellian. He wanted to astonish his mother. He started out trying to make France prosperous but when he got power, he thought only of making Paris into Rome. He was a sentimentalist about himself and a cynic about everything else. His attitude toward missionaries, for instance, is amusing. He had extremely imperialistic ideas and thought he could use missionaries in Africa and Asia to expand his dominion. Using their apparent sanctity as a decoy, he wanted to employ them as agents.

G.: You say Napoleon "wanted to astonish his mother." In your *New Year Letter,* I remember, you have a passage on matriarchal influence:

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Adits are entrances which led
Down to the Outlawed, to the Others,
The Terrible, The Merciful, The Mothers.

And I am a little perplexed by the meaning of the mother-image which reveals itself on the mountain in *The Ascent of F6*. . . . Would you explain more fully what you meant by that image?

A.: It seems to me that in man's search for God he erects before him a number of images. I believe that the mother-image is one of the last to be outgrown. . . . In this play the protagonist dies after the appearance of the mother on the mountaintop.

G.: With the insight of Freud, Shakespeare shows us that Coriolanus is motivated—partly at least—by a desire to "astonish his mother." He makes quite clear the bloodthirsty, terrible, severe attitude of the mother in speeches like

VOLUMNIA: *To a cruel war I sent him; from whence he returned, his brows bound in oak. I tell thee, daughter, I sprang not more in joy at first hearing he was a manchild than now in first seeing he had proved himself a man.*
VIRGILIA: *But had he died in the business, madam; how then?*
VOLUMNIA: *Then his good report should have been my son; I therein would have found issue.*

Don't you think that in a curious way this sacrificial willingness on the part of parents has been outmoded? Fortunately or unfortunately, the new type of warfare disallows such clearcut distinctions. In atomic war there can be no question of mothers sitting in a room somewhere, sewing and visualizing (like Volumnia) the bestial and distant actions of her son. Our weapons have made it impossible for the few to send others into the wilderness to atone for them. There is no desert to lead men into now except everywhere.

A.: True. Death has become that which it has never been: what may happen *to me* as a person. But one must admit the role of the parent is a difficult one, particularly in these days of technological "preventive" war. If I had children, I would want them to be either physicists or ballet dancers. Then they'd always have a job.

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CHRONICLES

Bach in 1950

JOSEPH KERMAN

A BACH FESTIVAL can be a dispiriting thing. Even at best, there is something bleak about listening stiffly for days to music never intended for concert, and something grotesque about sinking oneself, so uncritically and so long, into the curious spirit of eighteenth-century Leipzig. Perhaps it is worth putting up with the invariably reverential atmosphere in order to catch an occasional great performance, or a rarely-played great work; perhaps not. Festivals can kill composers as well as commemorate them, and have been known to do so; and one cannot always tell whether they involve artificially stimulated gestures of a still live composer, or actually a well-manipulated *danse macabre*. So eccentric an attitude may be due in part to guilt and sour grapes, I know. As an earnest devotee of Sebastian Bach, my place last summer was obviously Aspen, Colo., or Carmel, Calif., or Methuen, Conn., or Basel, or Vienna, or Prades, the Rome of our musical Holy Year. Instead I went to Maine, and on the radio heard only Leopold Stokowski and his horrible transcriptions.

It happened that the second centenary of Bach's death coincided with the second year of commercial long-playing microgroove records, a year that revealed something of their potentialities; suddenly record stores were bulging with new recordings of the most unlikely and marvellous music, from Josquin to Berg, from *Idomeneo* to *Elektra*. The equipment for 33⅓ rpm was first popularized by Columbia Records, with their budget for advertising, their influence with phonograph manufacturers, and their foolish trade war with RCA-Victor. But now it appears that several dozen smaller firms find that manufacturing records of comparable quality is cheap enough, in the present market, to allow serious competition with the large companies, particularly with music that is a little off the beaten track. Costs are sometimes minimized by making very small editions, sometimes by skimping on quality, and often by using European transcriptions. (But a performance by an unknown German organization, using a jangly harpsichord, is not necessarily any better than a domestic job at union scale.) Of all composers, Bach, Haydn, and Schoenberg have profited most lavishly from the dizzy profusion of LP's. The records are good, bad, and indifferent, just as they always have been, however slow they spin; but last year whole genres of Bach's music, hitherto scarcely touched, became well represented on the record lists. There is a certain concrete and lasting accomplishment here, says the stay-at-home, which shows as much homage to Bach's memory as all the pilgrimages to his various temporary shrines.

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There are over a hundred Bach entries in the comprehensive LP catalogue. Playing through a good number of these, one gets the impression that it is now usual to perform this music with some idea of simulating conditions that Bach himself might have used, or might at least have recognized: that is, the tempi are brisk without rubato, the texture is as bright and clear as possible, gratuitous dynamic changes and wild vibrati are avoided, and the continuo is filled out by an organ or harpsichord. This tendency, and especially its widespread acceptance, is fairly recent, speaking in terms of decades. Although these records probably give too encouraging a picture to be taken as average, I think we really are coming to a time when most Bach performances, however modest, will provide a basis for understanding and consideration other than those imposed by the nineteenth century. But the trouble is that "authentic" or literal playing can very easily become entirely dusty and mechanical; this may be less fatal to the essence of the music than romantic misreading, but it is certainly more mediocre and bloodless and deadly dull. Bach seems to have composed often without much thought to the specific performing medium, so that music appropriate to the violin appears in pieces for clavier, and so on, and further that whole idioms associated with one instrumental or vocal arrangement are regularly and incongruously transposed to another. But what he had in the back of his mind was not abstract acoustical figuration, but ideal musical phraseology. Performances which sacrifice the plasticity of musical lines to mechanical precision are introducing their own distortion and ugliness.

The point seems clear with two excellent and monumental recordings of the entire *Well-tempered Clavier,* by the harpsichordists Isabelle Nef [*Oiseau Lyre OL-2*] and Wanda Landowska [*issued so far: I, 1-8, Victor LM-1017; 9-16, LM-1107*]. Nef's playing avoids cuteness and sentimentality, and is chaste with registration, rhythmically precise, accurate (a lot of little slips, though), authoritative, self-effacing, in fact mechanical. While this can pass in some of the forty-eight, it spoils many others, such as G sharp minor, Book II. Nobody is going to agree one-hundred percent with a strong-willed musician like Landowska, who is willing to take risks. Many listeners prefer the Nef recording, and are distracted by such mannerisms as Landowska's rubati and her flamboyant arpeggiation of certain crucial chords. I myself resent many of her preludes; her slowdowns in the C major, for example, seem quite out of taste. But on the other hand her performance of the C sharp minor Fugue, the longest in Book I but not the most attractive, is one of the finest things I have ever heard. It becomes a living piece of music, not a contrapuntal construction; Landowska does this with tiny rubati, which she, but hardly anyone else, can employ without automatic romantic connotations. This is great playing; it has its excesses, but does not to my mind put the personality of the performer before the music. Playing which lacks the virtues of either Landowska or Nef is provided by Edith Weiss-Mann for an interesting group of clavier works:

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the Capriccio for the Departure of his Brother, the Toccata in D minor, the large Prelude and Fugue in A minor, and the three-part Ricercare from the *Musical Offering* [*Allegro AL-80*].

Among the concert organists, the mechanical player is E. Power Biggs; unfortunately nobody of Landowska's stature is making organ records at the present. Of the many technically excellent recordings issued last year, that of the third part of the *Clavierübung*, containing what are presumably Bach's latest twenty-one chorale-preludes, is most valuable [*to date the greater part has been issued, as Allegro AL-57*]. (The *Orgelbüchlein* and the *Schübler* pieces were already recorded; we still need badly the "Eighteen Great.") Robert Noehren's playing is precise, pleasant, and relaxed, if rather literal and unimaginative. He uses a modern baroque-style organ, which does not seem to have very interesting stops, at least by comparison with the genuine article as played by Fritz Heitmann. Heitmann has recorded about two-thirds of the *Art of Fugue* [*Capitol L-8121-2*], the Passacaglia and the D minor Toccata and Fugue [*L-8105*], and selections, from the *Clavierübung* [*P-8029*]. His playing has more personality than Noehren's; his registration is elegant, sometimes tinselly, and his phrasing is careful—a refinement that Noehren, like Biggs, has very regrettably neglected. But I do not react favorably to Heitmann's deliberate rhythmic irregularities; to me they romanticize the music; for instance, "Wir glauben all' an einen Gott" seems to me ruined when the pedal entries are all made "impressive" with little ritardandi. Noehren's performance of this one is not quite in time, either, I believe because of technical limitations, which can also be detected in his recordings of the six Trio Sonatas [*Allegro AL-61, 66, and 71*]. I find the little halts to emphasize the formal structure superfluous, and the registration on the hooty side. He gives us the first decent recording of the Prelude and Fugue in B minor, one of Bach's most magnificent compositions, in a big set with the great A minor, the short D minor, and the very early C major and D major pieces [*Allegro AL-29*]. Why never the beautiful late C major Fugue? Biggs also recorded the B minor last year, together with the G major and Trios Nos. 1 and 2, on a beautiful large organ which he plays as loudly as he can [*Columbia ML-4285*]. The comparison is all in favor of Noehren; but Noehren's A minor cannot match the previous recording by Weinrich [*reissued as MGM E-527*].

The records that have filled the greatest need, in relation to Bach's output and what was previously available, are those of a dozen of his best cantatas. Obviously it is much more difficult to present or record an acceptable performance of a cantata than of an organ fugue or a concerto; but as an example of what can be done, there is the extraordinary record of Heinrich Schütz' *Weihnachts-Historie* by the Cantata Singers under Arthur Mendel [*REB-3*]. The piece itself, the performance, and the recording, are all practically perfect —the performance thought out at leisure, unified, rehearsed, and *conducted* by

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a musician for whom playing in time is neither an effort nor an obsession, but a natural premise which lets the music sing itself easily, happily, and beautifully. No such care or musicianship has been devoted to any of the Bach cantata recordings. They represent average performances, which simply are not good enough. Listeners who are already well-disposed will no doubt get a great deal of pleasure out of them, with the usual aggravation; others have to be asked to reserve judgment.

One good performance is that by Robert Shaw and the RCA-Victor Chorale of a quaint composition, "Aus der Tiefe rufe ich," No. 131, probably the second cantata that Bach wrote [*Victor LM-1100*]. The choral singing, of which there is a lot in the early cantatas, is precise and clear, the soloists good, and the over-all conception intelligent and appropriate, if a little stiff. "Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis," No. 21, was composed a few years later, an ambitious and crude work with some very vivid and sweet pages [*BG-501*]. Together with four other cantatas, it is performed by a Viennese group under Jonathan Sternberg, and issued by the Bach Guild with much pseudo-musicological ardor. The participants are careful of the composer's intention, and mean to be clear, accurate, and in strict time, but the conducting is altogether lifeless, and, what is worse, rhythmically slack. Attacks and tempi are often bad, the chorus sounds unpleasant (I think because of the recording), and the soloists are not good enough, except the tenor—I never heard such clockwork singing as from the soprano. The cantata that succeeds best is "Schauet doch und sehet," No. 46, also a relatively early work (*pace* the blurb writer), dating from the beginning of Bach's experience as a composer of church music for Leipzig. This piece was obviously written with unusual care and intensity; it is enormously powerful, masterly, unbridled, and fantastic. On the same record a lovely pastoral cantata, "Du Hirte Israel, höre," No. 104, is mercilessly dragged to a standstill, except for the excellently sung tenor aria [*BG-503*]. Two later cantatas are the charming "O ewiges Feuer," No. 34, rather lightweight for Bach's church music since it was arranged from a wedding piece, and "Ich will den Kreutzstab gerne tragen," No. 56, for bass solo [*BG-502*]. A more intelligent singer should have been secured for this. Another so-called solo-cantata, "Schlage doch, gewünschte Stunde," No. 53, is nicely sung in the English Handelian tradition [*London T-5477*]; this is a single aria, pleasant to listen to, which really cannot be by Bach.

Two cantatas have been recorded in English by the Bach Cantata Singers under Reginald Jacques. The conducting is musical and straightforward, more so than Sternberg's, but the soloists are worse, and the performance is permeated by that earnest amateurishness and piety proper to festival presentations. "Halt in Gedächtnis Jesum Christ," No. 67 [*London LPS-161*], is less of a failure than "Lobet Gott in seinen Reichen," No. 11 [*LPS-160*], though the wonderfully imaginative second chorus is sadly disfigured. The mighty

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chorus that makes up Cantata No. 50, "Nun ist das Heil," is also performed disappointingly, under Carl Schuricht [*Capitol L-8077*]. Two German recordings are issued of the popular "Jesu der du meine Seele," No. 78. Walter Reinhart is evidently a Zurich counterpart of Ifor Jones of Bethlehem, who also made a recording of this cantata some years ago (in English). His conducting is mannered and expert, his conception of Bach personal, obtrusive, and undisturbed by the niceties of authenticity or correct style; still he sometimes achieves such fine things that one should never become too indignant. Thus Reinhart's performance [*Concert Hall CHC-59*] has a remarkably good reading of the recitative and aria for tenor, whereas Jones, with Mack Harrel, had a superb version of those for the bass. Reinhart does the final chorale very beautifully, but like Jones overplays the opening passacaglia; this movement is best on the other new record of the cantata, under Josef Kugler [*Mercury MG-15010*]. Otherwise the soloists here are weak, and the conducting overliteral. Of the three versions of the following duet, "Wir eilen," each imperfect in its own amusing fashion, I prefer Reinhart's. On the other hand, his recording of Bach's *Magnificat* seems to me malicious, much worse than Shaw's, for he characteristically blows it up into a giant festival piece [*Concert Hall CHC-60*].

The series of six joyful cantatas that comprises the *Christmas Oratorio* is performed quite well on the recording by Hans Grischkat and a Stuttgart ensemble [*Renaissance SX-201*]. Mechanical conducting spoils the choruses, which is a great pity, but the instrumentalists and the vocal soloists, except the soprano, practically make up for it—I am particularly taken with the violin solos. New German recordings of the *St. John* and the *St. Matthew Passion* [*Polydor PL-6550 and 6070*] present the works clearly, musically, and in their correct frame of reference. The performance of the *St. Matthew* seems slightly preferable in every detail, and enormously preferable in the recitatives of Jesus and the Evangelist—the difference between success and failure. But neither the singing nor the conducting, by Fritz Lehmann, is on the level set by the abridged *St. Matthew* previously recorded on 78 rpm by Gunther Ramin. By the way, these three LP performances are all slightly cut, contrary to advertisement.

Five out of Bach's six motets are now on records, where none were obtainable a year ago. They are strange works, among his most complex, and among the hardest to get to hear in adequate performances, for there is no shaking the do-or-die tradition that has them always sung *a cappella*. It is no new theory that Bach expected them to be accompanied by a *basso continuo* and perhaps instruments too; for one thing, he would not have attempted such risky harmonies without a firm instrumental matrix to fix the choral sound. But instruments are employed in only one of the new recordings, the most live and clear and immediate of them: "Jesu meine Freude" sung in English by the RCA-Victor Chorale under Shaw [*Victor LM-11*]. Unfortunately, you cannot hear the instruments; but at least the choir could, and is for once free of the

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rather desperate scrambling for pitch which generally characterizes *a cappella* singing, particularly of music as elaborate as this. I find in this performance, even more than in Cantata No. 131, signs of improvement over the Bach records that Shaw made several years ago: the tone is more attractive, the conducting is more relaxed, though as precise and dramatic as ever, and the lines are beginning to be phrased rather than punched out. That there is still room for progress can be heard very quickly from the excellent *a cappella* singing of the Berlin Academy Choir in "Singet dem Herrn" [*Capitol L-8077*]. The conception is more mature and musical, but naturally the intonation is not so sure; and this seems to me crucially important. Pitch trouble is worst in the recordings by the Schola Cantorum under Hugh Ross of "Komm Jesu komm" and "Lobet den Herrn" [*Columbia ML-2102*]. The performance is careful, tasteful, conscientious, and dull; again no continuo is used. I say so even though a harpsichordist plays the independent continuo part provided in the score of "Lobet den Herrn"; I have no gracious words for the kind of scholarship that hauls in a harpsichord to gain authenticity, and then fails to reinforce the bass line with some instrument than can be heard. (So far from gaining pitch security from the continuo, the singers apparently did not hear it at all, and in a lightly-scored section like the start of the "Alleluia" fugue they got quite excruciatingly out of tune with the harpsichord.) The poorest of the motet recordings is of "Der Geist hilft unsrer Schwachheit auf," also the poorest motet, by Paul Boepple and the Dessoff Choirs [*Concert Hall CHC-44*]. The chorus is tremendous, and was (I gather) deliberately recorded in a particularly resonant hall, so that the music gets all lost in the great vague distances.

In conclusion, it ought to be said that much of Bach's orchestral and chamber music has been recorded, some of it very beautifully[1]; but there is nothing very new about this, for the repertory was well recorded before, and is likely to be met with at concerts and festivals. Now there is a fair chance to know not only the Cöthen Bach, but also the Leipzig composer of organ music and choral church works. Then there is also the jocular Bach, and it is a delight to have good new recordings of those disarming pleasantries, the Coffee Cantata and the Peasant Cantata [*Allegro AL-53 and 82*]. The singers could have allowed themselves a little more fun, I should think, and in the first the violinists ought to have practiced a little harder; but one can summon up happy visions of such performances in the Bach family circle, half sight-read, with nobody troubling about the rough spots. How uncomfortable the Bachs would have felt under the spell of a bicentennial festival! And who better to exorcise that spell than Schlendrian and Lieschen, the tax-collector-poet and the tipsy peasants?

[1]Since writing this, I have heard parts of the complete recording of the Prades Festival [*Columbia ML-4345-54*]. Viewed historically, this is a touching monument, but most of the twenty-five works included are better recorded elsewhere. Of course the performances are uneven. The romantic impulse is never absent, but sometimes it is heroically restrained.

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Ballet Chronicle

FRANCIS MASON, JR.

THE SADLER'S WELLS BALLET returned to New York recently and provided us with another opportunity to observe the special virtues and peculiar faults that marked the company's first American tour. Again, the virtues were impressive enough to make the faults all the more remarkable. With its future assured by government support, with a repertory of ballets based on twenty years' work, with an experienced group of dancers and an able directorate, the Sadler's Wells is especially vulnerable to such criticism: there is no excuse for its not being an ideal ballet company. The fact that it is nothing of the sort was forcefully revealed by both the repertory and the quality of performance displayed during its second New York engagement.

In addition to full-length versions of *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Swan Lake* and three contemporary English ballets that were performed here last year, the company introduced its production of *Giselle; Don Quixote*, a new work by Ninette de Valois; and *Dante Sonata* and *Les Patineurs*, ballets by Frederick Ashton. *Giselle*, greatest of all the 19th century dramatic ballets, received a curiously undramatic revival at the hands of a company that has been almost wholly preoccupied with dance drama. The modern ballets served as additional proof that in the course of twenty years the Sadler's Wells choreographers have not progressed very far.

Don Quixote and *Dante Sonata*, except for a few parts in the former, might have been performed by a group of character actors, there was so little dancing in them. *Dante Sonata* is a protracted orgy, a Druid *Scheherazade*. Groups representing Light and Darkness cavort about the stage disarranging their garments to appropriate music by Lizst. Darkness seduces Light, Light seems to regain its honor, but tainted by debauchery, disintegrates. The ballet is individual in its ending; unlike other 'serious' English ballets (*Miracle in the Gorbals*, *Checkmate*, et al) its finale features two crucifixions, rather than merely one. *Don Quixote* is like a series of bad illustrations to a classic. In *Job* and *The Rake's Progress*, Ninette de Valois failed to bring to life the visualisations of certain themes by Blake and Hogarth; here the theme is not visualized or grasped, but illustrated merely, and in an inferior manner. De Valois' story ballets, like Massine's ballets to symphonic works, have no dance continuity. The dancing is connective, joining together a series of static poses that achieve meaning not on the stage but in the program note.

Les Patineurs is happily another matter. In the production of this ballet that Ashton staged some years ago for Ballet Theatre, dancers cleverly but tediously imitated ice skaters. In the Sadler's Wells production this trickiness is forgotten as the choreographer combines the two styles of skating and dancing

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and imitates them both at once. The result is exuberant exhibitionism—the ideal curtain-raiser. Ashton's success here and his success at comedy in *A Wedding Bouquet* and *Cinderella* demonstrate that ideas for literary ballets like *Apparitions, Dante Sonata* and *Illuminations* are unworthy of his genuine gifts. Rowena Jackson, Nadia Nerina and Brian Shaw were a few of the dancers who made *Les Patineurs* a delightful entertainment. Their vigorous yet accurate dancing ought to be noted by those American dancers who find vigor alone sufficient for their performances. Nadia Nerina is rapidly becoming a ballerina. Her parts were small in the Tchaikowsky ballets but they were all exquisitely danced. She projects a joy in her dancing which gives her a stage presence all too rare in the Sadler's Wells company. I have not seen the Sadler's Wells *Coppelia,* but I can imagine no dancer in the group better suited to the part.

Since the Sadler's Wells is the one ballet company outside the Soviet Union that presents *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Swan Lake* in their complete form, comparison with other contemporary productions is impossible. *Giselle* was the company's first presentation in this country of a familiar classic. Familiar as it is to most ballet audiences, *Giselle* never fails to come off if the ballet is produced and performed with attention to its drama and without stress on its respectable antiquity. The sets and costumes may be shoddy, the orchestra unrehearsed and the corps de ballet imprecise, but the ballet can still succeed. The sets and costumes for the Sadler's Wells revival were fresh and colorful, the orchestra was rehearsed and the corps de ballet disciplined, but everyone concerned with the production, from the director on down to the least important soloist, had worked on the assumption that the ballet was romantic nonsense.

The Sadler's Wells still has in Margot Fonteyn a great ballerina, but she is not a ballerina who dances all roles greatly. Unlike the Princess Aurora, Giselle cannot remain formally distant from the audience; the part must be acted while it is being danced. We admire Aurora in the first act of *The Sleeping Beauty* for her beautiful dancing; we are sorry when she is harmed. But the Princess is young and innocent and hasn't the least idea what has happened to her. We know that everything will turn out right in the end. We pity Giselle, on the other hand, not because we have admired her dancing alone, but because she has shown herself to be a certain kind of person who reacts to certain events in a specific way. She understands all too well the misfortune that befalls her and we understand it because she has instructed us. If Margot Fonteyn could disembarrass her Giselle as she disembarrasses her portrayal of Odette in her perfect performance of the last act of *Swan Lake,* her interpretation would show us a character, not just a dancer who mimes occasionally.

Moira Shearer's Giselle was excellent in the first act until the mad scene,

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when her loose red hair dominated her characterization and made it colorful at precisely the wrong moment. Shearer's dancing has not yet matched her natural beauty. She is strong and striking in rapid movement but in adagio she dances as if only the tempo of the music had changed, as if the steps did not require a different style of execution. This creates an impression of tenseness, one feels that she wishes to get on with the dance, even in the slowest movements, and the bravura style at which she might excel suffers because we have had no repose with which to compare it.

The Sadler's Wells has no classical danseur of distinction. Robert Helpmann as Albrecht in *Giselle* acted the role with a fulsome romanticism that contrasted vividly with the reticence of his fellow performers. It cannot be said that he danced the role at all.

The Marquis de Cuevas' Grand Ballet, an American company that has been appearing in Europe for four years, came to New York a month after the departure of the Sadler's Wells, and in the ambitions of its repertory and the quality of some of its dancers compared favorably with the English company. The Grand Ballet was unfortunate in its opening program, which displayed all of the company's weaknesses. The management chose to do this in a ballet called *Divertissement,* which consisted of assorted excerpts from *The Sleeping Beauty,* with the "Black Swan" pas de deux thrown in for good measure. There has never been a ballet so badly costumed, so badly designed, nor so badly danced. If any dancer has any fault, Petipa's choreography is certain to expose it, and although Rosella Hightower, André Eglevsky and Marjorie Tallchief danced splendidly when they had the stage to themselves, the consistent mediocrity of their associates made their virtuosity somewhat grotesque. As the Grand Ballet's engagement continued, matters improved considerably. While new ballets like *Salome* (Hightower-Strauss), *Persephone* (Taras-Schumann) and *The Enchanted Mill* (Lichine-Schubert) did not deserve production and revivals[1] of *Swan Lake* and *Petrouchka* were careless and incompetent, several classical pas de deux and a number of modern works more than compensated for these failures.

The "Black Swan" pas de deux, the pas de deux from *The Nutcracker; Giselle, Swan Lake* and *Petrouchka* gave Rosella Hightower many opportunities to prove her magnificent technical facility. There is no doubt that this ballerina can easily execute movements that many dancers find difficult if not impossible (the "Black Swan" in the Sadler's Wells production is elementary

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[1] *Mad Tristan* (Massine-Wagner), "The first Paranoiac ballet based on the eternal myth of love and death," should never have been revived at all; it deserves to be blotted from human memory. The excrescent decor by Dali is in keeping with the ballet's poverty of musical, choreographic and narrative invention. No more unintentionally but consistently comical work has been perpetrated.

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alongside the choreography Rosella Hightower dances). But it is also true that she dances every ballet as if it were the same. The music changes from ballet to ballet, the costume changes and the story changes, but the ballerina does not. Hightower's dancing cannot be called remote or distant or cold because there is no chance that it will engage us intimately. The trouble is that her dancing has not engaged Miss Hightower above the fundamental level of learning her parts.

Only in Balanchine's *Pas de Trois* did André Eglevsky give a performance in which he did not over-project his abilities as a classical dancer. His port de bras, for once, was exemplary, his manner was modest and unassuming, his dancing brilliant and faultless. Too often Eglevsky resembles the virtuoso tenor whose appearance in an opera elevates the production musically but makes its drama absurd.

Les Biches (Nijinska-Poulenc), *Night Shadow* (Balanchine-Bellini) and *Del Amor y de la Muerte* (Ricarda-Granados) were the finest of the modern ballets presented by the Grand Ballet. Marjorie Tallchief and George Skibine danced principal roles in each of these ballets and set an example that the rest of the company could not follow. Tallchief's simple presence on the stage is dramatic, and in these ballets she showed a range of dance accomplishment that expressed equally well youthful sweetness and strength, viciousness and tenderness. Her performance as the Queen of the Wilis in *Giselle* contains more dramatic dancing than can be found in the whole Sadler's Wells production of the ballet. Skibine's fine talent as both dancer and actor he is content to understate—a rare quality among male dancers.

Les Biches, more than 25 years old, is still a modern work of the first magnitude. Sections of the ballet are too long and over-developed and it was not well danced by the ensemble of the Grand Ballet, but Nijinska's comments on youthful behavior reach beyond satire and amused imitation to authentic wit. It is strange that a director of a ballet company can think such a ballet worth reviving and at the same time condone sleazy revivals of the classics and allow on the stage costumes and decor that represent nothing less than capricious taste. Little is wrong with the Grand Ballet that the Marquis de Cuevas himself cannot correct. The virtues of the company suggest that he is obliged to do so.

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REVIEWS

Remember That I Have Remembered

HUGH KENNER

PARADE'S END, by *Ford Madox Ford*. Knopf. $5.00.

I

"TO KNOW WHAT PRECEDES and what follows," the translator of Confucius reminds us, "is nearly as good as having a head and feet." That "the Present can only be revealed to people when it has become Yesterday" is unfortunately a concomitant maxim, as Wyndham Lewis, who formulated it, has long known to his cost. The map of English literary events for the first third of this century is only now at long last emerging; the importance of the current Ford boom (largely instigated by Mr. Goldring's biography last year) is that an entire continent has been added, and it is now possible to explain to people why they can't sail directly from Naturalism to Joyceland across the Freudian sea.

The working hypothesis of putative good will confronted by "modern literature" used to be that "modern psychology" explained its differences from Tennyson and Thackeray. The Unconscious and Free Association wrote and underwrote the vagaries of Woolf, Lawrence, Eliot, Joyce, Auden, Pound, and even Miss Stein. It is now becoming possible to publicize the fact that Lawrence, the only one of these writers who couldn't be suspected of using "Freudian" techniques, was the only one exhibiting a relatively uncritical interest in Freud; that the key to twentieth century English poetry is nineteenth century French prose; and that the writers of the half-century just closing "weigh" in exact proportion to their grip on this key.

As Mr. Pound has been telling us for thirty years, Stendhal's repudiation of "poetry with its fustian à la Louis XIV" was a crucial event in the history of letters. "At that moment the serious art of writing 'went over to prose,' and for some time the important developments of language as means of expression were the developments of prose. And a man cannot clearly understand or justly judge the value of verse, modern verse, any verse, unless he have grasped this." Again, "No man can now write really good verse unless he knows Stendhal and Flaubert."

It was Ford, and Ford almost alone, who in the first decade of this century absorbed and re-transmitted the discoveries of Stendhal and Flaubert on an English wavelength. It was a long time (1915—*The Good Soldier*—aetat. 42) before his practice really caught up with his conversation; but from the time of his collaboration with Conrad at about the turn of the century until the

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emergence of the Pound-Eliot-Lewis "Vortex" in 1914 he was virtually alone in his tireless insistence on (1) the adequation of language to the thing perceived or the sensation undergone rather than to an overriding concept of "style"; (2) the importance of making every episode, sentence, and phrase *function*—carry forward the total effect ("progression d'effet"); and (3) the principle of juxtaposition without copula of chapter with chapter, incident with incident, character with character, word with word, as the mainspring of poetic effect.

The quality of Bouvard and Pécuchet's rapture at their inheritance is both rendered and placed in twelve words by just one collocation of enthusiasms: "Nous ferons tout ce qui nous plaira! nous laisserons pousser notre barbe!" In the technique of that sentence lies all modern letters in embryo: the exact words, the thematically relevant detail, the *hokku*-like juxtaposition of imperial felicity and an unchecked beard. It has nothing to do with the unconscious or private associations; neither has anything in *The Waste Land*. And it was Ford who discerned and propagated that technique.[1]

Mr. Yeats had frequented the Symbolists but not the prose-writers of France; Ford the prose-writers but not the Symbolists. The young Ezra Pound in the London of 1912 or so, seeing Ford in the afternoons and Yeats on Monday evenings, effected some transfusion of ironic discipline into Yeats as well as a notable synthesis in himself. Joyce acquired independently a corresponding synthesis of the same French components. So did Wyndham Lewis. Assimilating Gautier at Pound's instigation, Mr. Eliot acquired a "hardness"—ultimately Flaubertian—that underlay his great work of the twenties.

Hence the "Vortex" of 1914-16; Pound, Lewis, Eliot, Gaudier-Brzeska, with Joyce a saluted ally; perhaps the only time—certainly the only time since 1600—when a congeries of masters was doing things in English that had not been done better on the continent. And as if in certification of his magisterial status, Ford's first masterwork, *The Good Soldier*, commenced serial appearance in the Vorticist organ, BLAST.

That World War I dissipated the Vortex may yet prove to have been its most far-reaching effect: as though the Armada had broken off English

[1]In *The March of Literature* (1939) Ford traces the principle of juxtaposition to, for contemporary purposes, Stendhal or perhaps Jane Austen. "The point," he adds, "cannot be sufficiently laboured, since the whole fabric of modern art depends on it." A page or two later he adds, "Nothing in the way of incident or character sticks far out of the story, but the effect of ordinariness set against ordinariness in a slightly different plane gives precisely the effect of not ill-natured gossip, which to the average intelligent mind is the most engrossing thing in the world, and of slight surprise which is the prime quality of art." A comparable and much more elaborate account is given in the invaluable third part of the Conrad memoir. The term "gossip" should be noted. Ford's unobtrusive good manners made it necessary for him to efface these principles by washes of casual verisimilitude. He got no further than a sophisticated impressionism, but as the English novel stood (and largely stands) it was a major innovation to get so far.

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intellectual life in 1588. The mind of England was abandoned to Bloomsbury, to its perdition. Some half-baked milieu or other becomes the intelligible context of the career of each of the surviving vorticists: Eliot's ironic truce with Bloomsbury and Lewis' ferocious anatomizing of its fauna, Joyce's involvement with the *Transition* gang, Pound's quest of new vortices in Paris and Rapallo (maelstroms in bathtubs) and Ford's in Paris and New York. Hemingway, Mrs. Woolf, the Sitwells, all writers subsequent to the Vortex, however disparate in quality, are dominated if not bounded by such milieux.

II

The false dawn and nightfall we have been outlining is in effect Ford's lifelong theme, though it is not at that level of realization that it engages his attention. It does not detract from his honour, but does a great deal to illuminate his orientations, that he never really knew what the Vorticists were doing. They knew what he was doing; they printed him in BLAST; yet BLAST seems the oddest possible context for his prose. His subsequent avuncular ironies about the impatient young "parading those respectable streets in trousers of green billiard cloth and Japanese foulards" connote equal amusement with the paraders and with the respectability. Ford was to that extent allied with the morning-coat ethos. That alliance was perhaps a condition of the skill with which in *Parade's End*—his second masterpiece—he achieved its indestructible record. For that is very largely what *Parade's End* is.

The artist who can actually get down on paper something not himself—some scheme of values of which he partakes—so that the record will not waver with time nor assume grotesque perspectives as viewpoints alter and framing interests vanish, has achieved the only possible basis for artistic truth and the only possible basis for literary endurance. Homer so registered values and was the educator of Greece. It is the hardest and rarest of jobs. This or that novel which we in haste mistake for a mirror of the age—*The Forsyte Saga* for instance—usually turns out to be a reflection in moving water. Language alters, connotations slither, the writer leans on what his audience understands, and that understanding does not endure. What Pope meant by "Nature" and "Reason" in the *Essay on Criticism* must be laboriously filled in by the archaeologist of traditions; that is the technical failure of a firmly-intended effort at definition, clear in Pope's mind, that it is now impossible to praise as Dr. Johnson, living closer to its terminology, could praise it. Thirty years' subsequent work made possible the almost lexicographical exactness of the fourth book of the *Dunciad*. The point at which a writer *defines* something, whether one moral term—"wise passiveness"—or an entire civilization—Cummings' *Eimi*—is the point at which he drives his peg into the cliff. That was the work Ford undertook for the values of gentlemanly England. It was in its way a

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harder job than Dante's, since it is the essence of those values that they comport with extreme conventionality of articulation. *La sua voluntate è nostra pace* relies not only on the image-structure of the *Paradiso* (*ella è quel mare*) but on a tradition in which terms were defined. Despite Ford's thirty years' cultivation of every technical wile, only his vastly allusive diffuseness could have done the job for " 'Bad form!' she exclaimed. 'You accuse me of bad form.' " I am not prepared to say that he needs every word on his 836 pages; but he needs nine-tenths of them.

> The two young men—they were of the English public official class—sat in the perfectly appointed railway carriage. The leather straps to the windows were of virgin newness; the mirrors beneath the new luggage-racks immaculate as if they had reflected very little; the bulging upholstery in its luxuriant, regulated curves was scarlet and yellow in an intricate, minute dragon pattern, the design of a geometrician in Cologne. The compartment smelt faintly, hygienically of admirable varnish; the train ran as smoothly—Tietjens remembered thinking—as British gilt-edged securities. It travelled fast; yet had it swayed or jolted over the rail-joints, except at the curve before Tonbridge or over the points at Ashford where these eccentricities are expected and allowed for, Macmaster, Tietjens felt certain, would have written to the company. Perhaps he would even have written to the *Times*.

That is the train that was, figuratively, wrecked at Sarejevo. Its "mirrors, immaculate as if they had reflected very little," convey with sufficiently potent wit and irony the limitations of the Tietjens world, limitations which generate the agonies and catastrophe of parts II and III of the tetralogy. Yet the great achievement of the first quarter of the work is the weight with which Ford manages to invest the code of "Some do not", hitherto accessible to Americans only via the stridently understated snobbery imparted in the public schools to the sons of drainage inspectors. This felt and realized sense of a flexible, scrupulous order cannot be illustrated by quotation; indeed the paragraph just quoted is almost the only one in this gargantuan novel that has something of its full effect alone, because it is the first. Progression d'effet—the reliance of every word on all the words that have come before—has hardly been carried so far in English. A sort of scrupulous lexicography working by the exact reproduction of the tones of numerous speaking voices invests the numb counters of "right", "wrong", "honour", and "gentleman" with the context of sensitive values informing the best minds of Edwardian England. "Admirable", in that first paragraph—"admirable varnish"—is such a counter. It is a recurrent word; and in what novelist but Ford is it anything but a clumsy blur of approval? To have registered a code in which "admirable" denotes a definite, complex congeries of values is a technical achievement sufficiently astonishing.

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The test of Ford's method is that the pseudo-values of the lacquered, ingratiating upstart Macmaster are demarcated without caricature from those of Tietjens. "Macmaster was obviously Scotch by birth, and you accepted him as what was called a son of the manse. No doubt he was really the son of a grocer in Cupar or a railway porter in Edinburgh. It does not matter with the Scotch, and as he was very reticent as to his ancestry, having accepted him, you didn't, even mentally, make any enquiries." This in its context is not snobbery; it registers exact and—again, in context—perfectly acceptable mental processes. Here is Macmaster enacting what he conceives to be pre-Raphaelite grand passion:

> . . . He heard himself quote:
> "Since when we stand side by side!" His voice trembled.
> "Ah yes!'" came in her deep tones: "The beautiful lines. . . . They're true. We must part. In this world. . . ." They seemed to her lovely and mournful words to say; heavenly to have them to say, vibratingly, arousing all sorts of images. Macmaster, mournfully too, said:
> "We must wait." He added fiercely: "But tonight, at dusk!" He imagined the dusk, under the yew hedge. A shining motor drew up in the sunlight under the window.
> "Yes! yes!" she said. "There's a little white gate from the lane." She imagined their interview of passion and mournfulness amongst dim objects half seen. So much of glamour she could allow herself.
> Afterwards he must come to the house to ask after her health and they would walk side by side on the lawn, publicly, in the warm light, talking of indifferent but beautiful poetries, a little wearily, but with what currents electrifying and passing between their flesh. . . . And then: long, circumspect years. . . .

This is magnificently "placed". It is handled, it goes without saying, more sympathetically than the analogously derivative amours of Gerty Macdowell; but—one must insist—no less critically. Parody is the clue to everything in Joyce, because his subject is itself a parody: aristocratic values preserved in Ireland, but preserved in alcohol; pickled foetuses; paralyzed. Ford's subject on the other hand is not a parody but a ghost; values obeyed but never enunciated, or merely felt against Philistine disobedience, or enunciated with ineffable monosyllabic clumsiness.

> "God's England!" Tietjens exclaimed to himself in high good humour. " 'Land of Hope and Glory!'—F natural descending to tonic, C major: chord of 6-4, suspension over dominant seventh to common chord of C major. . . . All absolutely correct! Double basses, 'cellos, all violins, all woodwind, all brass. Full grand organ, all stops, special *vox humana* and key-bugle effect. . . . Across the counties came the sound of bugles that his father knew. . . . Pipe exactly right. It must be: pipe of

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> Englishman of good birth: ditto tobacco. Attractive young woman's back. English midday midsummer. Best climate in the world! No day on which man may not go abroad!"

This, with its ironically technical choric imagery, must not be confused with mere prose Rupert Brooke. It is as near articulation as Tietjens ever gets. And Ford builds it up from thousands of careful observations of cadence, idiom, tone, and gesture. The recorder and recreator is at work: at work, not asprawl.

This point needs to be made. There is every reason to suppose that the Ford boom, like the recent Mozart, Austen, and Pope booms, is bottomed by nostalgia for an innocent bucolic order. All these artists were "civilized" in a leisurely and ample manner: so we are told, despite Miss Austen's sardonic "regulated hatred" and Pope's explicit feeling of living at the verge of the darkness of the Uncreating Word: as he was. One might suppose, to read some reviews, that

> *There's some corner of a foreign field*
> *That is forever England. . . .*

was, for some 800 pages, Ford's substance. A Brooke revival, really, would make in these terms considerably more sense. Ford's constant concern is to record and anatomize, not to wallow. The reasons for the impending smash (the matter of parts II and III of the tetralogy) are thoroughly implicit in *Some Do Not.* And the post-war world in which "*There will be no more parades.* . . . No more Hope, no more Glory, no more parades for you and me any more. Nor for the country . . . nor for the world, I dare say" emerges in *The Last Post* with as much toughness and as little nostalgia as, given the données of the novel, could be desired. The English Horatian ideal, now half-wordless and hence fated ("But what chance had quiet fields, Anglican sainthood, accuracy of thought, heavy-leaved, timbered hedge-rows, slowly creeping plough-lands moving up the slopes? . . . Still, the land remained"), bore in its increasing regressiveness the seeds of doom. George Herbert, Tietjens remembers, wrote *Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright, the bridal of the earth and sky;* but as for Tietjens, "the basis of Christopher Tietjens' emotional existence was a complete taciturnity—at any rate as to his emotions. As Tietjens saw the world, you didn't 'talk'. Perhaps you didn't even think about how you felt." Ford takes ample account of the "other England" (the ruling classes as distinguished from the governing class) who inhabit Mr. Pound's scabrous Hell (Cantos XIV and XV). The inarticulate Tietjens order with its massive tolerance permitted these to rise. Tietjens' thorough approval of the right of every man to use his own weapons is what, in a sense, undoes him and his world; Groby Great Tree that a Yankee tenant cuts down in the

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final pages, wrecking half the house and ending an era, represents not only the Tradition but its suicidal component. "It had always been whispered in Groby, amongst the children and servants, that Groby Great Tree did not like the house. Its roots tore chunks out of the foundations and two or three times the trunk had to be bricked into the front wall of the house." Yet its presence was not only tolerated but revered: "Christopher set great store by the tree. He was a romantic ass. Probably he set more store by the tree than by anything else at Groby. He would pull the house down if he thought it incommoded the tree." Ford, it should be noted, sought without irony his final audience and milieu among the compatriots of the Yankee tenant.

III

This order incompatible with the very exertion by which it might save itself corresponds with whatever prevents Ford from ranking as a very great writer. He is great enough. Such writing, page by page, phrase by phrase, mass by mass, employing every wile with utterly self-effacing virtuosity, can scarcely be equalled in English. But there is a component of softness—not etiolation as in the late Henry James, a reflex of the remorseless urge to *explain,* but something here and there a little closer to whimsy than is comfortable in an extrapolation from Flaubert. When he was not yet thirty Ford had written in the final paragraph of his second collaboration with Conrad, "And, looking back, we see Romance—that subtle thing that is mirage—that is life. It is the goodness of the years we have lived through, of the old time when we did this or that, when we dwelt here or there. . . ." It is remarkable how early in life he began writing memoirs. *Memories and Impressions* is dated 1910 (aetat. 37), and it is at least the fourth volume drawing on Ford's pre-Raphaelite childhood. His first books, fairy-tales and historical romances, regress in an analogous way. From 1910 till his death his eyes are turned backwards; the original title of *The Good Soldier* was, we remember, *The Saddest Story.* Pathos, until the Tietjens tetralogy, was his *métier:* pathos superbly controlled and objectified, but a little soft, a little naively susceptible to Edwardian ladies cool and finely gowned.

That his marvellous childhood had ended, then that his Edwardian years had ended, were successive themes of Ford's early books. *The Good Soldier* is transcendently the best of these books because it holds these themes of loss in a rarely articulated and depersonalized balance. And *The Good Soldier* plus all that the War implied gives us *Parade's End:* immensely complex personal misery plus the shattering of all the externals of the order that had sustained the poise of gentlemen. An important strand of *Parade's End,* then, leads us back to Ford's youth and out to his public *persona* of incorrigible reminiscer. On this strand may be blamed such lapses as occur.

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> Nice to be in poor old Puffles' army. Nice but wearisome. . . . Nice girls with typewriters in well-ventilated offices. Did they still put paper cuffs on to keep their sleeves from ink? He would ask Valen . . . Valen. . . . It was warm and still. . . . On such a night . . .

That "poor old Puffles" passes because it is Tietjens' word, but Tietjens at his least exigent. Tietjens here as often is a little too close to being Ford himself, vastly wearied and regretful, and whimsical. One doubts whether *in propria persona* Ford would have troubled to invent a better name than "Puffles", or cast a better phrase, because he too felt like that: as we can tell from reading *Great Trade Route* or *It Was the Nightingale.* Tietjens, that is, is much more literally Ford—as to his emotional quality—than, say, Prufrock is Mr. Eliot.

The success of *Parade's End* depends upon the way it exploits all Ford's skill while using just the material that will conceal his defects. They are the defects, however, which deprive him of co-status with Pound, Eliot, and Joyce, a little anachronistic, writing from a basis a little more in the time in which the novels are set rather than that in which they were conceived. The fact that he seems never to have noticed Eliot gives us one way of bringing this out. (The writer recalls two references to Eliot, both ironic, in the whole of Ford's oeuvre with which he is acquainted; and *The Waste Land* does not appear in *The March of Literature* reading-lists, whose standards are not so exigent as to exclude Auden, Masefield, Cummings, and Rupert Brooke.) Impressionism, Pound justly observes, meant something to Ford that it did not mean to Arthur Symons or George Moore; it meant a technical rigour that eschewed "fine writing" in the interests of the subject. But symbolism meant something to Mr. Eliot that it didn't to Ford, who seems not to have undergone the Symbolist impact at all.

Intensity, for Ford, was a matter of mass: *progression d'effet.* He saw this dimension alone in Eliot's work, apparently; and at the level of *progression d'effet, Prufrock,* however sound, was nothing more remarkable than the verse Ford himself could turn out in a morning. (His *On Heaven* was at this level skillful and moving enough to be—deservedly—an Imagist wonder in 1916 or so.) Ford presumably saw something absurd in the massive reputation erected by Eliot on a very slender output. Slender, that is, by Impressionist standards. Sound enough, but short-winded. Confronted by

> *I should have been a pair of ragged claws*
> *Scuttling across the floors of silent seas*

Ford would have recalled Bouvard's "J'ai envie de me faire saltimbanque sur les places publiques!" and reflected that the technique was easy after all. The "tentacular roots" of those precise images, "reaching down to the deepest terrors and desires", would not have been apparent to him. He describes the effort of the good stylist to make sure "that the word chosen was not too *juste.*

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A too startling epithet, however vivid, or a simile, however just, is a capital defect because the first province of a style is to be unnoticeable." "Impressionism" implied author-suppression at that level. The Eliotic "impersonality" —an author-suppression compatible with great local intensity, so that line after line lodges in the memory—apparently did not strike him as a meaningful extension of that principle. He could not, to put it crudely, have started a poem with the word "Polyphiloprogenitive". He was, ultimately, unwilling to let the language do the work. The impressionist aim—"above all, to make you see"—immolates language to subject in a futile as well as a salutary sense. The poet's *language* is something vastly more than himself; it contains the past of the race and in its potentialities for juxtaposition the intelligible species of all the mysteries. His *subject* is, as it reflects his pattern of interests, something much more like himself, invested with his limitations of emotion and vision. *Parade's End* is a fine and moving novel because its author was a great and massively honest craftsman, and a fine and serious and sensitive person. But apart from Joyce's oeuvre there is still no fiction—unless some of Lewis's—great, as is much poetry, because the language, which does not merely extend the author but transcends him, has gone into independent action and taken on independent life.

IV

To talk about other possible novels is not to wish that Ford had written a novel other than the one now reprinted. It would be worth most novelists' while to spend some years of study and emulation on the procedures and felicities of *Parade's End*. It opens slowly, amid a multitude of leisurely and supple flashbacks, because Ford must begin by getting down that age now gone in all its complexity and implication. Christopher Tietjens, whether or not he "comes off" as a detachable human being (which is irrelevant), succeeds superbly as the multi-faceted incarnation of the virtues of an age; nor even confined to an age, but backed by the traditional mass of centuries. The counterpointing of Tietjens' marital troubles and the debacle of Tietjens' England achieves with enviable tact what would in clumsier hands be *Cavalcade* superimposed on *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*. And the richness of the dozen marvellous closing pages is backed by the elaborately differentiated planes of reference of the preceding hundreds. It is into the overgrown but still unblocked tunnels to dialect and faery England that the dying Mark Tietjens glimpses: it is from them that he extracts his legacy for the living:

> "How are we to live? How are we ever to live?"
> "Now I must speak," Mark said to himself.
> He said:
> "Did ye ever hear o' t' Yorkshireman. . . . On Mount Ara . . . Ara . . ."
> He had not spoken for so long. His tongue appeared to fill his

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mouth; his mouth to be twisted to one side. It was growing dark. He said:

"Put your ear close to my mouth. . . ." She cried out!

He whispered:

" 'Twas the mid o' the night and the barnies grat
And the mither beneath the mauld heard that."

. . . "An old song. My nurse sang it. . . . Never thou let thy barnie weep for thy sharp tongue to thy goodman. . . . A good man! . . . Groby Great Tree is down. . . ."

He said: "Hold my hand!"

* * *

She said:

"Perhaps it would be best not to tell Lady Tietjens that he spoke. . . . She would have liked to have his last words. . . . But she did not need them as much as I."

Novels on Several Occasions [1]

NORTHROP FRYE

THE THEME of *Across the River and Into the Trees* is death in Venice, with Colonel Cantwell, a reduced brigadier and a "beat-up old bastard", as a military counterpart to Mann's beat-up old novelist. The colonel is a lonely man. Around him is an impersonal hatred directed, like a salute, at his uniform; behind him is the wreck of a marriage and of the career of a good professional soldier; in front of him is his next and last heart attack. He meets all this with a compelling dignity, and there is pathos in his struggles to control his temper, to be "kind", and to avoid boring other people with his bitterness. It is not that he wants to be liked, but that he senses the rejection of humanity which is involved in every real breakdown of human contact. He has reached the rank in the army at which his superior officers give their orders in terms of a hideous "big picture" in which strategy is based on politics and publicity stunts instead of on fighting. He cannot cope with this because he cannot relate it to his job of leading men into battle; and when the war is over, he feels his kinship with those who have been maimed and victimized by war, as he knows that no one has profited from it except profiteers. But he has gone far past the stage at which the word failure means anything to him. His approaching death gives a bitter intensity to the ordinary events of his life:

[1] ACROSS THE RIVER AND INTO THE TREES, by *Ernest Hemingway*. Scribner. $3.00. THE DISENCHANTED, by *Budd Schulberg*. Random House. $3.00. THE HOUSE OF BREATH, by *William Goyen*. Random House. $3.00. TWO ADOLESCENTS, by *Alberto Moravia*. Farrar, Straus. $2.75. SHADOWS OF ECSTASY, *by Charles Williams*. Pellegrini & Cudahy. $3.00. THE BARKEEP OF BLEMONT, by *Marcel Aymé*. Harper. $3.00. THE TWENTY-FIFTH HOUR, by *C. Virgil Gheorghiu*. Knopf. $3.50.

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to the food and drink of his last meals, to his last look at the violated beauty of Italy, and, above all, to his love for a nineteen-year-old Contessa who comes to him, a dream girl out of a dream city, to offer him an unconditional devotion. Everything that remains for him in life he accepts, simply and without question. The girl loves him, we are told, because he is never "sad": there is no self-pity which rejects life by clinging to the ego. On the contrary, he has some tenderness for braggarts and charlatans who respond to the exuberance in life, and if there is a desire that still holds him, it is for children to continue his own life, which may be one reason why he calls the Contessa "daughter". It is a great theme, and in the hands of someone competent to deal with it—say Ernest Hemingway—it might have been a long short story of overwhelming power.

It is pleasant to dwell on the idea and postpone the fact. In the opening scene and in the curt description of the colonel's death, there is something of the old Hemingway grip. In between, however, the story lies around in bits and pieces, with no serious effort to articulate it. The colonel is entitled to rancorous prejudice—the reader doesn't expect him to be a Buddhist sage, and in his political and military reflections one wouldn't mind the clichés of a commonplace grouch if they built up to something bigger, but they don't. We expect to find the love scenes stripped of eloquence, but not to encounter a cloying singsong of "I love you truly" and a repetitiousness that looks like padding. The role of the Contessa is that of a more attractive version of a deferential yes-man. The colonel wanders in an empty limbo between a dead and an unborn world, at no point related to other human beings in a way that would give his story any representative importance. As far as anyone can be, he is an island entire of itself.

This last, of course, is part of Hemingway's point. His story is intended to be a study in isolation, of how the standards of a decent soldier are betrayed by modern war. The colonel is not a writer, and the things that are happening to him he assumes to be incommunicable, because he has found them so. And he dominates the book so much that something of his distrust of communication seems to have leaked into the author and paralyzed his will to write. In this kind of story the hero's loneliness must be compensated for by the author's desire to tell the story and, to adopt one of his own cadences, tell it truly. But this involves the total detachment of author from character which comes when sympathy and insight are informed by professional skill. This detachment has not been reached, and the book remains technically on the amateurish level in which the most articulate character sounds like a mouthpiece for the author. Hence all the self-pity and egotism which have been thrown out the door reappear in the windows between the lines. The reader is practically compelled to read the story the wrong way, and the result is a continuous sense of embarrassment.

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Budd Schulberg's *The Disenchanted* adopts a scheme not unlike Hemingway's. The story is the final macabre souse of an American novelist, Manley Halliday, fabulously rich and successful in the twenties, now (the book is dated around 1938, so that the bender decade is recollected, not in tranquility, but during the hangover) ridden by debts, compulsive memories, a wrecked wife, diabetes, alcoholism, neglect and self-neglect. The role of Hemingway's heroine is played by a younger writer, Shep Stearns, who is of the depression generation, and whose harassed solicitude is less uncritical than hers and more touching. Instead of the big picture of strategy we have the big pictures of Hollywood, where a producer named Victor Milgrim is giving the ex-genius his last chance.

That the prototype of Halliday is Scott Fitzgerald is not, to put it mildly, much of a secret, but the author has begun with a quotation from Henry James asking us not to make too much of this. I myself forgot it entirely as soon as I recognized in Schulberg's wistful, genteel bum the outlines of a more familiar figure. All the well-loved conventions follow in his wake. The same dapper-seedy, timid-jaunty appearance; the same juxtaposition of luscious dreams (here presented as memories of a wonderful past that we can't quite believe in) and a miserable reality; the same crazy plot that lurches from one nightmare to another until it explodes in a crescendo of slapstick and tragedy. The only time Halliday reveals a mind superior to that of any other educated drunk is when he makes some acute remarks on Chaplin films. No, the book is far closer to *City Lights* than to *The Great Gatsby*.

Halliday rose to success by brilliant satire on the phony society he saw around him. It was not important, as Stearns at first thought, that he should understand the real significance of his satire. It was important that he should detach himself from the society he described, that in his success he should consistently bite the hands that fed him, which seems to be the only personal rule imposed by art on the artist. Failing in this, he became, as Blake says, what he beheld, and was swept into a noisy and vulgar inferno where he got a hot glare of publicity but never any privacy. The society happened to be the America of the twenties, but there is nothing peculiar to that age about the situation itself, as the author comes near to suggesting—the second postwar era's attitude to the first occasionally gets a shade prissy. Henry James long before had shown how society sits like a fumbling, witless sea anemone waiting for someone with genius, beauty, freshness, or whatever else permits free movement to come within reach of its tentacles. It caught Halliday, and here the Chaplin parallel breaks down. Halliday retains his dignity because he makes society look as ridiculous as himself. But not, as in Chaplin, far more so—he has lost his innocence, as the Chaplin hero never does, and the best he gets with society is a split decision.

The story is well written in spite of its unvarying *martellato* style, and the

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dialogue—a soft gilding of wit over a paste of wisecracks—is admirable. Yet, to make it more than a *Lost Weekend* with cultural overtones, Halliday needs to be tragic rather than pathetic, and he has to be heroic to be tragic. The heroic dimension in him could come only from his genius: we should see not only the destruction of the man, but the blinding of the vision that was presumably in the man. The discovery that his final bit of writing is a masterpiece sounds like a contribution to the plot by Victor Milgrim—again, I am taking the story as it stands and not as fictional biography. Halliday's wife is forever trying to translate the *Saison en Enfer,* and somewhere in his flashbacks (called "Old Business", which I dislike) we should have caught a glimpse of the demon whispering into his ear those fatal, lying words that end "dérèglement de tous les sens."

William Goyen's *The House of Breath,* a first novel, begins with a rather dismaying rush of words and some self-conscious mannerisms, notably a kind of nudging parenthesis, but it soon settles down and becomes a style of some power as well as readability. The title refers to a house in an East Texas village, the past life of which is evoked, partly through a narrator who spent his boyhood there, and partly through the reflective monologues of the people who have lived in it. The pervading tone of the book is thus one of nostalgic reminiscence. This would normally be discouraging, because the emotional urgency of nostalgia is so often mistaken for inspiration, and yet it is one of the hardest moods to communicate. But here is one author who has boldly faced material that dozens of writers have failed with and made something of it. There is some fine and sensitive description of the woods and the river and the farm animals and the changing seasons, and an intricate but clearly developed pattern of themes and symbols is built up somewhat after the manner of Virginia Woolf. The house is thought of as haunted by its memories, and the monologues are extracted from it as though Yeats were right, and it was possible to sink into an *anima mundi* where one could tune in on a psychic ether of memory and points of brooding return. It sounds ectoplasmic, but it has been skilfully done, and when we finish this remarkable book we have a panorama of a dozen interconnected and brilliantly summarized lives.

The author has an acute ear for the slurred elisions, agglutinative syntax and somnolent rhythms of vernacular speech, and he is particularly successful with females and the female mood of querulous patience. He has also discovered that when East Texas lifts up its voice in complaint the result is very suggestive of a banshee wail, which adds point to his scheme. He appears to be a little afraid that his characters will not get enough sympathy from the reader unless he insists on their claims to it. At any rate his genuine humor seems a bit furtive and some of his symbolism is over-italicized—the village the house is in is called Charity, for instance, which evidently means something, and there are other traces of portentousness. But these are trifles in a book

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that gets an extraordinary amount said in its hundred and eighty pages, a book which, if it remains something of a stunt, is an outstandingly clever and successful one.

Each of Moravia's stories of Italian schoolboys deserves the higher compliment of being called a story that you can put down. One pursues a clumsy and faked narrative as one gets through a crowd on a sidewalk, in haste to be rid of it—a point often overlooked by those who sit up all night over mystery stories. Moravia fits normal life: one can drop his Agostino or Luca anywhere with a coherent structure already in one's mind, secure in the writer's ability to continue it properly. Nothing happens to Agostino except that boredom, bad company and ambiguous feelings toward his widowed mother fill him with a typically adolescent misery. Nothing happens to Luca except that he gets sick and recovers, his nurse climbing into his bed during his convalescence. The virtuosity of the born story-teller then goes to work. The story of Luca takes us deep into the death-wish that caused his illness, and shows how acts that outwardly seem only perverse or petulant really belong to an inner sacrificial drama. And as Luca recovers, the archetypal significance of what he has done takes shape. His story is a humble but genuine example of what the great religions are talking about: of losing one's life to find it, of gaining charity through renunciation, of becoming free by cutting oneself loose from everything that attaches and motivates. Symbols, ordinarily as hard to make convincing in fiction as jokes, drop into the right places, from the very adroit use of the *Purgatorio* to the final sentence about a train coming out of a tunnel into daylight. It is characteristic of such a story that a quiet word like "nausea" or "absurdity" (neither likely to be the invention of the unobtrusive translator), simply because it is the right word for its context, can bring more of what Sartre and Camus respectively are trying to say into focus than a good many pages of Sartre's metaphysics.

In the background of Moravia's stories is a solid sense of bourgeois Italian society, its values, its folklore and its class conflicts. There is something oddly old-fashioned about this solidity: it is like finding good carpentry and seasoned lumber in a flossy new bungalow, and one feels that the swaying Venetian backdrops of Hemingway or the dissolving pan shots of Schulberg are unfortunately more up to date. Moravia still clings in technique to the old traditions of novel writing in which those who had a sense of established society, like Austen and Dickens and Trollope, wrote with authority in the centre of the tradition, while those who lacked it, like Scott and Lytton and Wilkie Collins, had to depend on plot formulas for support. This kind of novel is disappearing with the society that produced it, and a new approach has become necessary. Society is not a containing unit for characters any more: it is too nomadic and too much an open arena of clashing personalities and ideologies. Even in *The House of Breath* the emphasis is thrown on the centrifugal movement away

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from the community. One can see the new plot formulas of the successors of Lytton and Collins shaping up in modern middlebrow thrillers, and the question naturally arises of what central vision has replaced the social vision of Austen and Trollope.

My guess is that it is a vision based on the sense of moral autonomy. The plot formulas of today's thrillers are solutions to problems. Why did A murder B? Because of narcissist conflicts resulting from a mother fixation—psychological thriller. Because the romanticism of a privileged class led him to make a scapegoat of a personal enemy—class-conscious thriller. Because the act of sin breaks out of the intolerable suspense of moral indifference—theological thriller. All these use dialectics and treat a condition as a determining cause. I call them thrillers because the characters are propelled by the movement of the extraneous dialectic, instead of simply acting out what they are. I think that the central tradition sees man as conditioned at every point, but self-determined, so that all these dialectics are contained, so to speak, with none of them allowed to dominate the novel or dictate its resolution. Thus Schulberg's first novel, *What Makes Sammy Run?*, would have been a dialectic formula with some Marxist or Freudian solution if the author had concentrated on trying to answer the question instead of on the irreducible fact of Sammy's running. If I am right, then the existentialist doctrine of moral freedom has a good deal of historical and literary point, though so far it seems to me to have produced only a fourth thriller formula.

Charles Williams' *Shadows of Ecstasy* is an intellectual thriller, and its ancestors are Lytton and Rider Haggard—it is by *Zanoni* out of *She*, if my grammar is right. The hero, or villain, Nigel Considine, has, by a super-yogi discipline, enabled himself to live indefinitely (two hundred years and going strong), and has begun an attempt at a "second evolution of man," politically the resurgence of Africa, and psychologically the calling up of the unawakened powers of passion and will, which has for its ultimate goal the return from death. Because this program is the result of a human will to power, Considine is a kind of Antichrist, and we are supposed to pick up a great variety of allusions to different aspects of Antichrist as we go on. If we get them all—they include the Bible, Caesar, Constantine (whose name the hero echoes), Yeats' Byzantium, Dante's Emperor, Milton's Satan and the superman of Nietzsche and Shaw—we get quite a liberal education.

It is a good thriller, written with humor and relaxation, with more respect for the art of fiction, more tolerance of irony, and less didactic hectoring than are usual with Williams. The fantasy has its own logic, and the characters and setting are studied carefully enough to give us the comfortable sense of a familiar world taking a holiday from routine. It is not giving anything away to say that the Galilean conquers, but though the author's Christian dialectic determines the solution, it does not try to force the reader's assent, and so

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avoids the disadvantages of melodrama. The losing side gets our sympathy and a chance to put on a good show: we do not feel pushed around nor do we get claustrophobia from a closed system of thought. In all these respects *Shadows of Ecstasy* offers a remarkable contrast to a better known but far cruder version of the same story, *All Hallows Eve*, where the Aunt-Sally epithet "morbid" seems to me for once appropriate.

On the other hand, Marcel Aymé's very able satire, *The Barkeep of Blémont*, is what I mean by fiction in the central tradition. Blémont is a small provincial town, and the kind of intrigue that goes on there is the same old intrigue, love affairs, political jockeying, graft, and the screening of self-interest by humbug. But the time is 1945: the humbug is the exposure of "collaboration", the graft is profiteering, the jockeying is in terms of Communist tactics which have the police terrorized and the middle class almost resigned to defeat, and the love affairs are engaged in by people who have, or are trying to get, political influence. The individual who tries to mind his own business in such an environment merely creates a power vacuum. The attaching of individuals to pressure groups is as though the children of a tough and badly run school had been supplied with rubber truncheons. There is a brutal lynching, watched and approved by the whole town; there is a vicious beating in public ignored by the police; a hunted Nazi gives himself up to certain death; the police lock up people without influence at the bidding of people who have it, and the barkeep, an amiable gorilla who loves Racine and is trying to sweat out hexameters himself, is shot, quite unnecessarily, while resisting the arrest of his muse. One pole of the book is represented by a Vichyite collaborator and war profiteer named Monglant, who is adroit enough to keep his money and become equally influential in the new regime, besides being in cahoots with the Communists. But a fear of public opinion makes him as unable to enjoy his possessions as any other miser, and he finally discovers that his only pleasure is in watching and causing pain. This, of course, is the cancer of Nazism, still uncured after its defeat.

In spite of all this, the tonality of *The Barkeep of Blémont* is one of balanced and unstampeded maturity. When the characters have political ideologies, they patter glibly through the gramophone records that we expect to hear; but we are shown with great clarity how the ultimate use of such apparatus is always to rationalize essential human activities, like bearing false witness or coveting one's neighbor's wife. The psychological drives coincide with the political ones: brutalities not only demonstrate political strength but give sexual pleasure, and a Nazi can get that way because he needs love. But the author sees no logical determining force in social behavior. Society may at any time be caught in the bondage of fear and hypocrisy, and the freedom of the individuals in that society suffers accordingly. But man himself, society as a whole, is self-

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imprisoned, and the easy fatalism that externalizes the imprisoning power is making an evil god out of the dark shadow of humanity.

This at any rate is the doctrine of a character named Watrin, who polarizes Monglant, and who seems to mean something rather special to the author, as he gets the last word. Watrin, for reasons too complicated to go into here, has gained an innocent vision of life: the world is new created for him each morning; he feels that not only nature but man can be loved, if not admired, and he not only enjoys the present but is hopeful of the future. It is reassuring to have him as a spokesman, if he is that, for what is on the whole, apart from some rather nagging irony, a wise and witty book. It is also somewhat disconcerting to notice that the characters who are better than "all too human," Watrin and the barkeep, are touched with slightly sentimental fantasy, and are not quite believable.

We have now to hear from Virgil Gheorghiu, who wrote *The Twenty-Fifth Hour* to prove that man has lost his moral autonomy for good. The two chief characters of this book are Romanians, one a peasant named Johann Moritz and the other an intellectual named Traian Koruga, and the story begins in the Nazified Europe of 1938. The peasant's wife is coveted by a sergeant who gets rid of his rival by accusing him of being a Jew, and the peasant starts on a picaresque journey like those of Candide and Schweik, except that Gheorghiu's satiric touch is not light and his skill in character-drawing is not up to giving us a real picture of innocent simplicity. Johann is imprisoned, tortured, sold as slave labor to Germany, declared to be one of the world's purest Aryans by a Nazi race pundit, dragooned into the S.S., and imprisoned again as a Nazi by the Americans. The intellectual is, in the now somewhat hackneyed *Faux-Monnayeurs* formula, writing a novel called *The Twenty-Fifth Hour,* and is persecuted by the Nazis for his Jewish wife and by the Americans, under whom he eventually dies, as an enemy alien. The novel ends with Johann conscripted again to fight for the Americans in the third world war with Russia, which has just begun.

The thesis both of Koruga's book and of the one that encircles it is that all humane and individual values have been wiped out by a technological civilization which can deal only with quantitative units. Men have become the "apes of robots": their admiration for the efficiency of machines has led to the deification of mechanical values. Eliot, Auden, Northrop, Keyserling and others are quoted in support, sometimes strangely out of context. It makes no difference what any modern power calls its ideology: its end product will be the same, a bureaucracy of officials who have authority but no freedom. The official can only act mechanically and function on a subhuman generalizing level; he wants the people in front of him to be filed and forgotten, and he gets angry and flustered whenever he is reminded that they are unique human beings. The title means that the human race has already had it: not even a Messiah

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can save us now. For though Gheorghiu sees much the same facts as Aymé, he is not sustained by the latter's belief in the permanence of society: he sees only the individual and the mass, and his outlook has all the hopelessness of his very common type of naive and introverted anarchism. Koruga, though called a saint, is not really even a martyr, for a martyr is a witness to another community: he is only a victim, and whatever he represents dies with him.

There is probably very little in this book which has not happened, and doubtless nothing which could not happen. It is difficult to know what to say for art when it is outstared by truth, or some kinds of truth. In the face of torture and humiliation it seems almost pedantic to say that the fiction-writing is perfunctory and the social theories slapdash. The book is humorless and preachy, but its subject is not amusing, and maybe we could do with a sermon. The "apes of robots" doctrine is as over-simplified as a dictator's oratory, but the facts it tries to explain are as grim as ever. The irony is contrived and overdone, but so is the irony of a refugee's life. As for the "too late" thesis, one may feel that the very existence of so earnest a book tends to contradict, if not the thesis itself, at any rate the author's belief in it. But one sympathizes with the shrillness of tone, with his anger at our easy boredom and short memories, at the Erewhonian in us who feels that nobody's suffering is undeserved if he makes us uncomfortable to hear about him. In any case Gheorghiu's conviction that American democracy can bring nothing to Europe but a third invasion of stupid and brutal officials makes *The Twenty-Fifth Hour* a document of great importance: it reflects an attitude too frequent among non-Communist Europeans to be shrugged off, and whatever reasons and evidence it presents need to be carefully examined. The hatred of occupied countries for an alien uniform, which Hemingway's colonel discovers but fails to understand, is expressed here from its own point of view.

Yes and the Devil

R. W. B. LEWIS

THE TRANSCENDENTALISTS, by *Perry Miller*. Harvard University Press. $6.50.

HERMAN MELVILLE, by *Newton Arvin*. William Sloane. $3.50.

VERY FEW PERSONS, I suppose, respond with anything like equal warmth to the writings of Emerson and the transcendentalists on the one hand and of Melville and Hawthorne on the other. The effort to do so—except for those whose professional obligations in the field of American letters require them to regard everything with the same lack of animation—is likely to appear as a challenge to irony and one that is scarcely worth the strain. Transcendentalism and the tragic novels seem to occupy two quite different areas, and between

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them no satisfactory system of intercommunication has been invented. The division is not new, though tempers are shorter: Hawthorne and Emerson politely endured the long silences of their walks together, while the author of one of the most telling accounts of *The Scarlet Letter* in our time—Mr. Yvor Winters—becomes savage as he reduces the cheerful dialectical guesses of Emerson to the iterations of a village half-wit ("God is love, I am God!"). And yet the example of Orestes Brownson may be suggestive: for even after embracing an orthodoxy a good deal more strenuous than that of Mr. Winters, Brownson could continue to recall the appeal of New England idealism and to remember its source: "Men had reached the center of indifference; under a broiling sun in the Rue d'Enfer, had pronounced the everlasting 'No'. Were they never to be able to pronounce the everlasting 'Yes'?"

The final phrase has become almost a label for foolishness among the enlightened, and I am not anxious to propose that, in a time when the center of indifference has become almost a Mecca, we should try to return to the transcendental affirmations. But we are being wisely told these days (most recently, for example, by Mr. Lionel Trilling) that it is our responsibility as citizens and critics to hold in our minds both the yes and the no of our culture. Perhaps this means that we are not to allow the yes of Emerson and his fellows to be hustled out of our consciousness by the more aggressive no of Melville: or at least of the Melville who revealed himself in the remark about Hawthorne that he "can say No! in thunder, and the devil himself cannot make him say Yes." The two nearly contemporary observations leave us in some doubt as to the felt direction of the devil's prodding; and Melville may even have had in mind the amiable willingness of Emerson to entertain the notion of being the devil's child. But that is only a playful verbal instance of a difficulty in the doctrine of sustained tensions; and we have a better occasion for exploring the ironic possibility. The occasion is the appearance, in the same season, of the collection by Perry Miller of the main documents of transcendentalism and the critical biography of Melville by Newton Arvin, an addition to the American Men of Letters Series. Both volumes are masterpieces in their way.

The Transcendentalists—which is at once monumental and astonishingly readable—is a chronological array of well over a hundred items, from a sermon by John Buckminister early in the century, establishing the atmosphere ("Surely the lines have fallen to us in pleasant places") to the *Historic Notes* of Emerson in 1880. Mr. Miller's contribution is a story told in a series of introductions to each of the entries: a contribution, according to his publishers, which offers "unobtrusive guidance," but which is about as unobtrusive as the choral character in a Pirandello play. For the technique here is even more admirably dramatic than in Mr. Miller's *Jonathan Edwards*, with the characters (Ripley, Hedge, Brownson, Alcott, Norton, Parker, Margaret Fuller and several walking gentlemen) now speaking in their own right; and with Mr. Miller's voice telling us where we are and what the personages are really saying. The result is a

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genuine and progressively meaningful dialogue; and the dramatic method very nearly lifts the rich and complex discussion out of the realm of intellectual history. I say "very nearly," because Mr. Miller evidently wishes to stay within the protective confines of history, and he is even given to somewhat sly allusions to Albert Schweitzer and to current wranglings about academic freedom. The notion, of course, is to demonstrate the relevance of transcendental insights to the problems of our own time; although our own time may not always know what is truly relevant to it. It may be that our time, like theirs, presents exhaustive alternative categories of thought and action which exclude the suggestions it most vitally needs.

The striking advances in intellectual history, indeed, are often the result of ingenious answers to what may later appear to be false questions: like the comic misunderstanding of the scholastic theory of knowledge by which Descartes managed to "revolutionise" epistemology. Transcendentalism, Mr. Miller makes clear, grew out of social and psychological responses, as well as out of intellectual choices; the revulsion felt by a Margaret Fuller at the blank and undistinguishable upturned Sunday faces was perhaps as important to the development as the disciplined attacks upon orthodox doctrine by a Hedge or a Ripley or a Parker; there are moments when the only appropriate attitude is a kind of impatience of the soul. But as a movement, and Mr. Miller makes this abundantly clear also, transcendentalism took shape and definition from a long series of essays and lectures, frequently in periodicals founded for the purpose, which examined alternate possibilities and proposed new resolutions. The alternatives were Unitarianism and Calvinism, not a very useful dialectic, but the only one there was: a rather drab empiricism on the one hand, humanistic in its way, but severely limiting the powers of man to what could be acquired through the senses; and a decadent and frozen Augustinianism on the other, calculated more to remind the individual of his own misery than of the glory of God. Such was the context of debate, as it was sketched in the discourses of Theodore Parker and in the essays by George Ripley on Herder and Schleiermacher.

According to Perry Miller, the discussion was essentially religious in nature.

> The transcendentalist movement is most accurately to be defined as a religious demonstration. The real drive in the souls of the participants was a hunger in the spirit for values which Unitarianism had concluded were no longer estimable. It had, to all appearances irrevocably, codified into manageable and safe formulations appetites that hitherto in America had been glutted with the terrors of hell and the ecstasies of grace. Unless this literature be read as fundamentally an expression of religious radicalism in revolt against a rational conservatism, it will not be understood.

It is worth noting that the opposed terms in that passage are "religious" and "rational", which is a fair sign of the intended meaning of each. But in any

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case, the impression one receives from the texts is that the main discussion, while originating in the field of religion (that is, in speculation about the nature and the media of divine activity), was diverted by the peculiar structure of the argument into the field of psychology (that is, the nature and modes of action of the individual human consciousness). Ripley, writing about Herder, was engaging in explicitly religious discourse when he attacked the "supernaturalist" position at its most vulnerable point to reassert, in romantic prose, the traditional formula for the relation between nature and grace: the divine spirit acts "not to impair the healthy action" of the soul, but to "call forth its noblest powers in order and harmony." But during the surprisingly acrimonious controversy over miracles, or the evidence for the Christian religion (the heart of the dialogue), the radicals were driven, not to a subtler adjustment of nature and supernature, but to ever larger affirmations of the inner resources of the human spirit. The permanent which Parker was eventually to contrast with the transient in religion consisted in certain primitive convictions: the given in the human psyche.

It was, of course, the age of psychology, or, as Emerson and Marsh called it, the science of mind. Secret symbols, long before driven inward and buried under the hardening surface of Protestantism, were uncovered. And for the grand enterprise of tapping them (the volume is especially illuminating here) there was considerable help from abroad: Constant and Cousin; the mental exercises suggested by Coleridge as *Aids to Reflection;* the symbolic enactment of Wordsworth's *Ode*—a poem as often invoked and rifled then as *The Divine Comedy* has been in a later generation. The whole radical movement indeed was a kind of forced reversion from sterile theological dispute to the unspoiled spontaneity of the child; and if the content of the "religion", so oriented, was not very large (slighter even than the sorry assortment of doctrines remaining after the Unitarian reduction of the reductions of Calvinism), it did include the naive assurance of the child that he is free and will live forever. The benefits were perhaps most immediately apparent in the social field; and Mr. Miller demonstrates thoroughly that, in addition to the religious and literary pronouncements, transcendentalism expressed itself in social and political terms. The terms were basically educational, from the efforts to promote the education of "the laboring classes" to the experiments of Bronson Alcott and Elizabeth Peabody: an antic version of Socrates' interview with Meno's slave-boy, but somehow persuasively right-minded.

What is steadily compelling about transcendentalism, in fact, is the sure sense of refreshment and rebirth that runs through its most inflated prose. Its language may have been suggestively grandiose and unparticularised; and when the transcendentalist accepted the universe, it did sound a little as though he were formally accepting an invitation to a ball. But it never sounded stale, for transcendentalism was an honestly liberating movement: the first stage in the painful transition from the deadly wasteland of early nineteenth century

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orthodoxy. Brownson tells, in *The Convert*, of the mounting dismay with which he listened to Parker's *Discourses* in Boston, his sudden awareness of their fundamentally naturalistic direction; but Brownson's own development would not have been possible without the transcendentalist experience.

Mr. Miller, in support of his contention, that transcendentalism had an "inherently religious character," goes on to say that if that character has not hitherto been properly appreciated, it is chiefly because the actors involved tended to "put their cause into the language of philosophy and literature." It is a very fine suggestion, for the concern with organic form and natural language was not limited in that age to the available genres of poetry; and Emerson (who, along with Thoreau, is tactically slighted in Mr. Miller's volume, for wholly justifiable reasons) reverted more than once, in his journals, to the extent to which the sermon and the theological tract had outlived their formal usefulness: the parliamentary speech and the novel might better (Emerson felt) satisfy the needs of the day. At the same time, and on the evidence Mr. Miller himself supplied, I am tempted to reverse his particular judgment; it seems not so much that (with the exception of Jones Very's remarkable essay on Milton and Christian drama) the literary essays are religious in nature as that the religious expositions are essentially literary: I mean, they appear as aesthetic orderings of symbols descriptive of changing states of human consciousness. Perhaps the example of poetry doing the work of the religious essay may be found in the writing of Herman Melville: at least, as we reconsider that writing under the guidance of Newton Arvin.

There are many merits to Mr. Arvin's book, but most of them seem to derive from an almost inspired sense of pace and timing. It may be that Mr. Arvin says nothing unmistakably new, although I believe he makes use of some very recent biographical discoveries; what is new is that Mr. Arvin, while leaving nothing out, exercises a critical method which permits every fact and every opinion to find its own place and assume its own significance. The result is anything but a pastiche: on the contrary, it is a fresh organic whole in which the various parts of moments of the critical and biographical discussion serve to interanimate each other. Our sense of the author's totality of conception and insight is steadily enlarged by his sensitivity and discrimination in particular instances. This may be why Mr. Arvin's is the first Melville I have met in whom we can believe as the author of *Moby-Dick;* the death of his father in madness, Melville's development as an artist, the available intellectual and imaginative resources of the period—all dealt with thoroughly and luminously in their own place: these elements, along with others, create for the reader a kind of expectancy, only perhaps to be fully gratified by a *Moby-Dick.* By the time he gets there, Mr Arvin needs to say very little about the incalculable stirrings of genius.

The treatment of the early years and the first novels is uncommonly suggestive, since Mr. Arvin quietly underlines the way in which Melville began

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where the idealists left off. Transcendentalism had moved away from a religion which was in fact a collection of dry and external conventions; it achieved a release of the energies of primary consciousness. It managed to midwife the new birth and it even brought the child along a few years; it stopped short and shyly at the first hint of puberty (except for those who ended up in the Rome of Margaret Fuller or Orestes Brownson). Melville, taking his start amid the idealist enthusiasm, grew into full intellectual adulthood, to the point of a new and vital awareness of the relation, if not between man and God, certainly between the human and the larger than human. Mr. Arvin, in his eloquent account of the experience in the Taipee valley and of the book which Melville largely based upon it, is expert at revealing how much Melville's impulse drew upon the main current of the day: how it was almost a dramatic enactment of something which remained slightly bookish among the transcendentalists. The spiritual release which was accomplished in essays and journals elsewhere was literally achieved by Melville in the act of jumping ship. But the original organic connection between Melville and the idealists did not prevent Melville, a comparatively few years later, from writing about "the blackness of darkness" and from declaring that Emerson was cracked. It was an unfolding, not a mere change, and not due only to auctorial ambitions or an unlucky companion in bed: the development was much rather due to Melville's deepening awareness of something other than creative benevolence in the depths of consciousness, and to the intuition, as Mr. Arvin says, of "something wild, arbitrary, and irrational in the very structure of things." It was about this, that Captain Ahab said No! in thunder.

We should be careful not to identify the two insights, for although the second may be generated from the first, they are not at all the same in kind. One has to do with the quality of man, and it is psychological and ethical; the other has to do with the quality of a pre-existing order in which man is summoned to exert his will, and it is metaphysical and possibly theological. The unique and enduring value of Mr. Arvin's analysis of *Moby-Dick* is that he both disentangles and then orders the two levels of awareness: while not forgetting that they are fused in the poem and are integral to a single rich poetic effect. Mr. Arvin makes a new use of the ancient fourfold method of exegesis, handsomely adapted to the nineteenth century doctrine of correspondences as well as the later revelations of psychiatry. Beyond the literal, the first of Mr. Arvin's levels and one which needs continually to be re-established in discussing Melville, there appear: the oneiric, the moral, the mythic. The oneiric meanings of *Moby-Dick* are important because they are a "dreamlike projection of Melville's unconscious wishes and obscure inward contests," and so tell us how much of his personal life and ambivalent personal attitudes formed part of the primary material in the new violent version of the epic of the lost son. But the moral meanings are more important; and on this level, Mr. Arvin traces the tragedy, not of Greek hubris or of Christian pride, but

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of individualistic egotism, which has a little of each. And the mythic meaning is the most important of all; because the myth "embodies some form of the conflict between human wishes and nonhuman forces," and so gives a narrative version of the ultimate relation by which the lesser relationships are shaped and qualified. Mr. Arvin approaches the mythic in a gingerly manner, evidently seeing all kinds of trouble out of the corner of his eye; but once he has fixed his terms, the discussion is exact and penetrating, and on a rising spiral of intensity. It is all the more apparent that, whatever Melville's anagogic conception may have been at the time of *Moby-Dick*, he was resolutely engaging a dimension of experience untouched and probably unimagined by almost any other writer of the century.

What the Whale symbolises on the mythic level (in addition, for example, to symbolising the parent-principle on the oneiric) is, according to Mr. Arvin, something like this:

> an Animal God such as only the imagination of that century in the Western world could have conceived and projected; a god in Nature, not beyond it; an immanent god in some sense, not a transcendent one; an emergent deity, not an Absolute; a deity that embodies the physical vastness of the cosmos in space and time as astronomy and geology have exhibited it; a deity that represents not transcendent purpose and conscious design but *mana;* energy; power—the half-conscious, half-unconscious power of blind, restless, perhaps purposeless, but always overbearing and unconquerable force.

However appalling, that is a religious conception, and *Moby-Dick* is a religious book—as *The Scarlet Letter, The Castle* and *Bread and Wine* are religious books; not, of course, books about religion, but poems which enact the ultimate or anagogic or mythic realm of the relation between human will and a superior power. As to Melville's own attitude towards the devil-god, Mr. Arvin suggests that it was larger than Ahab's; he sees in the coin nailed to the mast the symbol of a necessary doubleness of vision, an awareness at once of destructive and terrifying aspects and of sublimity and light.

About this I am less entirely convinced; and along with Mr. Arvin's odd undervaluation of "Benito Cereno", it is the only passage about which I would raise a question. If it has proven possible to contain in our minds the yes of Emerson and the no of Melville, it is because they are judgments of different entities, enunciated at different, though related, phases of experience. Emerson was affirming the creative capacities of the human spirit; Melville was refusing to submit, not only to contemporary optimism, but more seriously to a demonic if not a diabolic power. It is true of course that Melville found it impossible (except possibly in *Billy Budd*) to remain satisfied either with acceptance or with denial: either with, as Hawthorne said about him, belief or disbelief. It is not as certain that he roundly advocated the ironic position. In the chapter of *Moby-Dick* about the whale's eyes, Ishmael remarks that they are

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so far apart that the whale is capable of perceiving two wholly different and even contradictory motions at the same time, one out of each eye. It is something godlike, Ishmael implies. But he cannot help adding that the capacity for double vision is very likely the cause of the whale's noted uncertainty of movement, of the disempowered timidity he often displays. The whale, seeing perhaps too liberally on both opposite sides, is smitten (Ishmael observes) with "a fatal perplexity of volition."

Short Stories by Six [1]

SEYMOUR KRIM

THE POOR OLD NOVEL may very well have died 20 years ago, as T. S. Eliot said, but the short story still flourishes, as a form if not a flower. At hand are six recent collections; not all of them are readable, an important requirement for this form, but it is one of the amusing ironies of letters that the unreadable is highly reviewable. Since ideas are both the critic's pleasure and his business, he can enjoy himself, feel superior, and earn some money just by thinking out loud about other men's failures. This being so, we will now proceed to take wanton advantage of it.

Mr. William Sansom comes to us highly touted. Eudora Welty, in a blurb on the back of the jacket of *South,* says that Mr. Sansom's prose is always "working," recording all the fluctuations of experience like a seismograph or a fever chart. This is true, in the sense that the author is extremely sensitive to his physical environment—is obviously stimulated by it—and his prose is a panting commentary of what he has seen and heard. The present volume is composed of some seven sketches that were apparently inspired by a visit the author took to the southern European countries that border the Mediterranean. Characters, perhaps fictional, appear in all of the sketches (except for one where they are replaced by dogs), but the exclusively human element of these pieces is less important than the dense, hot-country experience with which the author wants to drench each page. His writing is quite rich, in fact over-luxuriant for most tastes, but it is lip-smackingly evident that Mr. Sansom gets true sensuous pleasure out of using language and communicates this zestfulness to the reader. This is to the good, if excessive; the major difficulty with the sketches, however, is that they are not easy to tell apart, and at the end of the volume the reader feels as if he has been fighting his way through a jungle that threatened to choke him every ten yards. This feeling of strangulation is brought

[1] SOUTH, by *William Sansom.* Harcourt, Brace. $2.50. CHARACTER AND SITUATION, by *Christopher Sykes.* Knopf. $3.00. CAST A COLD EYE, by *Mary McCarthy.* Harcourt, Brace. $2.75. THE WATCHFUL GODS AND OTHER STORIES, by *Walter Van Tilburg Clark.* Random House. $2.75. MIXED COMPANY, by *Irwin Shaw.* Random House. $3.75. THE COLLECTED STORIES OF WILLIAM FAULKNER. Random House. $4.75.

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about by Mr. Sansom's abandoned expressiveness; the reader longs in vain, while going through these sketches, for a bracing concept or design that would landscape this particular jungle, and yield the sense of gratification that attends the imposition of mind on matter.

Thus, by over-loading his readers with texture which attempts, skeletonless, to support itself, Mr. Sansom defies a kindergarten law of nature, and quite naturally gluts before long. All his native emotional juices, a potent inheritance compared to much effete British writing, are too often squandered in the present book. However, from the Kafka-type stories the author published some six or seven years ago, plus this book (the present reviewer did not read Mr. Sansom's novel *The Body*) the impression left by the author is that he is still trying to find his own way, and that these sketches should not be regarded as the measure of his worth. Should he, in the future, actually engage in a lowdown wrestle with his material, the control of which would very likely increase its excitement as well as give it shape, then a singularly rich fiction could come forth.

To go from William Sansom to Christopher Sykes is quite literally a relief, if the two books are read one after the other. Mr. Sykes is not what one would call a fully accomplished writer, and he has apparent weaknesses, but his temperament is thankfully much different than Mr. Sansom's. *Character and Situation* is his second book of fiction, and still shows the hand of the good-natured amateur in the unnecessary meandering of several of the stories; but in contrast to *South*, each of Mr. Sykes' stories has a point and is built up to achieve a definite end. The tone of the stories runs from gentle irony to almost farce, and the characters include a clergyman, a psychiatrist, a novelist (who seems to be specifically modeled on Somerset Maugham), and various other "civilized" people. Mr. Sykes' book is more pleasurable to read than Mr. Sansom's because his stories are genuine narratives rather than steamy impressions; and yet, oddly enough, one feels confident that the younger Mr. Sansom has more of a future than the author we are now considering. The one essential that is missing from the stories in *Character And Situation* is strength, even vivacity; Mr. Sykes does not have romp or vigor in his comedy. His virtue is humaneness, of what might be called the pipe-smoking kind, and his style is appropriately mild and ruminative. While we are often amused, and occasionally and rather unexpectedly on the verge of being chilled by a revelation of viciousness on the part of one of the characters, the climax is rarely reached; the author's easy-going tolerance takes the sting out of his material, and several of the stories stroll around the block when they should be going home. It has been said that the great art in story-telling lies in concealing the art; yet Mr. Sykes, relying on his natural charm and acumen almost exclusively, is in need of just the opposite. A more obvious artfulness in his manner would sharpen the matter and set it in bolder relief; from the evidence it would seem that Mr. Sykes' range will always be restricted, hence the more reason for making the most of its potential bite with a more Maupassantish cunning.

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Artfulness, advised for Mr. Sykes, is hardly a deficiency in Mary McCarthy, especially as regards her style and the way in which her material is conceived, if not in the actual working-out of the story itself. But Miss McCarthy is a more ambitious writer than Mr. Sykes and it is more difficult to evaluate her. *Cast A Cold Eye* is her third book; yet, thus far, she has not written one sustained book in the accustomed sense. Her first, *The Company She Keeps*, was called a novel (despite Mr. Eliot), but was only so, in any strict terminology, by virtue of the autobiographical heroine's appearance in each of the episodes; the whole was united only by her presence, and the material was not integrated to make a narrative that develops in time and meaning as well. Its merit, apart from the conspicuously articulate and finished writing, lay in the keen observations of the author, who displayed an almost masculine intelligence at work roasting the game that a female sensibility had trapped. *The Oasis*, Miss McCarthy's next book, was much less distinguished than the first; again, this was called a "novel," but was hardly novella length and showed little skill with the traditional elements of fiction. Its satire, of a political utopia mismanaged by New York intellectuals, was often ponderous and suffered from what Henry James called "the platitude of mere statement"; apparently there was relish involved if readers knew who the characters were based upon, but aside from this gossip interest, necessarily lost to non-sect members, the book did not "come off." *Cast A Cold Eye* is the third of these not-entirely-a-book books; it is composed of approximately half short stories and half *New Yorker* "I Remember Mama" pieces. In general, it may be compared to a series of classic poses struck by a superbly composed and expensive model, so audience-conscious, however, that her face is a mask.

The esthetic emotions aroused by such a sight as that described above are considerable and in a noble tradition; but when applied to Miss McCarthy's fiction, the very flawlessness seems to vitiate mobility and interest within the context of any given story. The author's unusually keen perceptions are evident in each story, but like so much of what can most easily be called *Partisan Review* fiction, the intelligence does not seem to be worked into the narrative invention proper, but resides rather in the critical faculty of the author. The result is that readers can admire Miss McCarthy, but not her stories. When she writes in her own person it is difficult not to be struck by the balance, precision and often the weight of her thought (inflexible though her scale often is); she is never relaxed or unguarded as a writer, but her very composure is queenly enough to command attention. In the stories proper, however, Miss McCarthy's large style is not sufficient to conceal the fact that thus far she has displayed weak powers of narrative invention; more important, the author seems to have imposed upon herself none of that necessary dirty work that goes on within the lively story.

Considered in a broader perspective for a moment, Miss McCarthy might be taken as a not entirely fair example of a school of fiction-writers which *Partisan*

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Review has, by its temper if not its express wish, encouraged, and whose self-conscious, highly intellectualized work has regularly appeared in that magazine. (Miss McCarthy surely is not representative as regards her aristocratic air, her considered style, and her cold eye; and yet the author definitely seems to qualify by virtue of what might be called her 100 Great Books binding, which prevents her stooping to put some "story" into her stories.) Much of the tediousness of these writers seems to come from an inability, thus far, to transmute their heavy load of ideas into an appropriate art; what the reader is often presented with, in the guise of fiction, has the total effect of a Paper that might be read at the Rand School (or, as in several of Miss McCarthy's pieces, at Sarah Lawrence); the whole adds up to a genuinely new pedantry in American fiction. The pedantry seems hardly the result of too much literary intelligence, which would think twice before permitting itself to wear a beard in this culture (except the Be-bop kind). It seems rather to come from an understandable, but hardly condonable, transvestism: namely, the attempt to put European clothes on an American body. Natural as this perversion may have seemed to a generation suckled on Freud (as well as Marx, Kafka, Joyce and all the other Big Berthas of Europe), a paragraph *in Women's Wear Daily*[2] notes that sport clothes are being worn all year round, now. . . .

The next writer to consider, Mr. Walter Van Tilburg Clark, is little known in the east; although he has published three novels he is not discussed in New York little-magazine circles and the present reviewer first made his acquaintance with this book of short stories, *The Watchful Gods and Other Stories*. For a city person to write about Mr. Clark is unfair, perhaps, because he is liable to be overly impressed with the author's subject matter and the way it is treated. Will Rogers could make one feel guilty for wearing shoes, and several of Mr. Clark's stories of the Far West tend to diminish urban emotions, and make them seem unnecessary indulgences, in much the same way. And yet this reaction does the author an injustice; he is not a "primitive," and doesn't intimidate the reader by pointing to the Rocky Mountains with a mute and holy look. Mr. Clark takes pains to demonstrate in each of his stories that he has a genuine feeling for the minute and homely processes of nature, and for men and women who live in such a primary environment; the result is that he uses his materials with care and respect. His story "Hook," about the birth, young manhood and death of a hawk is, in my opinion, an extremely powerful and authentic short work, not marred by even a shadow of the coyness that even gifted writers show when dealing with animals from within. This particular story also reveals, in miniature, some of Mr. Clark's less enviable qualities; fortunately their elaboration is reserved for other occasions in the volume. One major criticism of the author is that he has a tendency toward monotony; the straightforwardness of his writing is so unrelieved, and includes so much small detail enroute, that the monotony seems traceable to an element of naivete on the author's part. He

[2]November 13, 1950.

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expects his readers to be engrossed by the minutiae that engross him; yet it is doubtful if many of them will be able to share his microscopic pleasures to such an extreme degree. When this quality is not overdone, however, it gives a solidity and unique integrity to several of Mr. Clark's creations. Apart from "Hook," stories of a hunting incident, an Indian school, and the simple portrait of a grown man playing with a home-made boat near some rapids, are memorable. There is a thoroughness to each of the author's stories that imposes them on the reader's imagination even when he is impatient with Mr. Clark. If it is a question of being bored occasionally, one would rather have it done by someone as independent and even slightly heroic as this writer, whose novels the reviewer now intends to read.

To be bored by Irwin Shaw is not the same experience; he is on guard, like any "professional" writer whose livelihood is at stake, not to be dull—above all. The stories in *Mixed Company*, for the most part, originally appeared in *The New Yorker*, and were so typically the attitude of what might be called the middle-class core of the Popular Front generation that they had for many readers an importance which transcended their merely "literary" qualities. The topical sensitivity of Mr. Shaw, which now dates him with a suddenness that less sensitive writers escape, made him very often a peculiarly intimate writer to a large liberal, and in particular liberal-Jewish, audience in the last decade. Attitudes toward love, politics and the earning of a living gave, or seemed to give, the stories a directness and pertinence that made one want to read them as one did the newspaper.

To read the stories now from the vantage point of a new decade is to realize how often glib and superficially conceived many of them are, despite an extremely knowing surface gloss; but at the same time, in my opinion, the achievement can not be as lightly dismissed as one might wish for one basic reason: Mr. Shaw is the most accomplished of the short-story writers we have considered up to this point. His dramatic flair, however disingenuous on occasion, is at home in the small area of short fiction that often makes more rewarding talents seem extremely awkward. Mr. Shaw, in fact, reminds one that the short-story *is* a form, legitimate and self-sustaining. However, despite Mr. Shaw's mastery of the form—mastery of it to the limited extent that he wants to or can go—there is much to criticize; and from a *Writer's Digest* point of view, in spite of "narrative-hooks" and other gimmicks, much that is sheerly unreadable. "The Girls In Their Summer Dresses," a famous story on a famous Greenwich Village theme, seems on second reading merely to flirt with a complicated problem, rather than to be as fatefully insightful as it is presented. Other stories, less contrived in the structure, like "Main Currents of American Thought" and one of a Hollywood writer in Mexico at the outbreak of the recent war, are exceptionally vivid in their impressionistic handling of the once-contemporary scene; but their very closeness to the events described, which in texture makes them acutely ear-and-eye conscious, gives them a corresponding lack of depth, so that the implicit gehenna in these stories now seems

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a Radio City version compared to the enormity of hell in less facile and emotional writers. Too many of the stories present a relatively "easy" pessimism and then stop there, the intention being to let the gathering emotion really become meaningful to the reader only after he has finished the story, in the now dated tradition of *The New Yorker's* turn-on-the-gas vignettes. (Since psychoanalysis has cushioned that magazine's editorial offices, Hope may be observed weekly getting off the floor and making its way back into the fiction.) The attaching of so much religious emotion to the secular material Mr. Shaw uses gives a disquieting, and cheapening, element to even the best stories. In summary it might be said that the stories in Mr. Shaw's collection date easily because the author's emotions were but the typical if heightened ones of a period; they do not, like short stories of Fitzgerald and Hemingway, transcend the time-place circumstances of their creation because their feeling is too often impure and rigged-up for the expediency of the occasion. Finally there is in these stories a good deal of the Broadway-Hollywood treatment, which, as a noted MGM producer put it, "is great art and great box-office at the same time, see?"

Interestingly enough, William Faulkner, whose *Collected Stories* are the last book to consider, has helped create some of the "great art" of which the MGM producer spoke; however, only one of the films he wrote for Hollywood, *The Big Sleep,* came near to being great box-office as well. The fact that Faulkner has written for the Warner Brothers, and particularly wrote the script for a Raymond Chandler Black Spider thriller (his other produced screenplay was for *To Have and Have Not*) is pertinent in considering his stories in the general sense. It supplements something told me by a friend who visited Faulkner in Oxford, Mississippi, several years ago. This young writer, armed with the latest skeleton key to *Finnegans Wake,* called on Mr. Faulkner, they chatted, and had a drink or two. The writer came away with a deep sense of shock because the Nobel Prize winner-to-be's bookshelves were sagging with tough-guy detective fiction.

Mr. Faulkner, of course, would probably have been amused by this reaction; and yet to anyone attempting to evaluate his formidable contribution, the Hollywood aspect of his writing career plus the detective-fiction anecdote (and *not* even considering the detective fiction which he himself has written for and published in *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*) can be considered as characteristic. It shows both his extraordinary facility and his lack of standards; the elements of gaudiness and violence-for-its-own-sake in his work as well as the love of craft and his participation in the vital, if illegitimate, life of his time. In the last issue of this magazine Frederick Morgan, while paying homage to E. E. Cummings, pointed out his lacks. Other signs of the times, both printed and verbal, point to an increasingly evident fact: the most unusual and gifted writers of the First World War generation—Cummings, Hemingway, Faulkner —have *made* their contribution, and much of the practical criticism of the generation whose literary artists must replace them temporally will have to be concerned with what these men lack for today. Fiction surely does not have

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the formal continuity of the sciences or philosophy, and perhaps not even of poetry; and yet there is a complex but tangible continuity nontheless, if demonstrated only by the young writer's attempt to emulate the contemporary work he admires. Thus it would seem that one job of a criticism concerned with opening up the roadblocks to a new fiction would be to single out what is worth preserving, and what is not, in the work of the immediate past.

Let us attempt it with Mr. Faulkner. The present volume is composed of the stories that were originally published in *Dr. Martino And Other Stories*, as well as *These Thirteen* (1932 and 1934), plus seventeen new ones that have never been published in book form before. It seems naive to treat these tales as if they had not already, with the author's novels, played a part in shaping the contemporary American literary consciousness; rather, let us try and assess the whole even at the expense of the parts. Perhaps the major contribution that Faulkner has made to short as well as long fiction, when the smoke of confederate interpretation is blown away, is, as compared with American writers who preceded him, an extreme sophistication in the text itself. From the very first it is apparent that while the author's subject matter is often obvious in itself, he must treat it with audacity in order to gain the particular set of effects he is after. Primary is what we might call the invasion of the reader's neutrality; in order to gain an immediate shock, the author will plunge the reader into scenes whose place and time are not at once explained. Thus the reader will most often feel himself being enveloped by a fictional situation which he does not at first understand; there will be a reference to events or names which he could not possibly know, which concretely suggest a past before the story opened, and give the present fictional situation the illusion of being the continuation of a process which began long ago. Since it is a continuation, it is treated with extreme familiarity on the part of the author or narrator; the reader, who is in the position of a stranger, is introduced at once into an immediate close-up of the situation, whose full significance he can only understand later, and whose perspective he must accept as "the truth." Later, as the story develops, the author can make perverse and striking narrative use of having given only this close-up by altering his perspective or by revealing the full narrative significance of a thread which, although not deliberately "planted" in the obfuscated beginning, is developed to function as if it were. When he alters the perspective, or reveals the "plant," this is again done suddenly and familiarly and is much like an actor's throwing away the most important line in a play, so that the surprise and shock-value are that much more stunning. It is precisely this overwhelming theatrical effect that Faulkner apparently must get to find the so-called objective correlative for his emotion.

Unlike those of Poe, similarly theatrical, Faulkner's tales are not logically conceived so as to lead up to the climactic effect and then subside. They are obviously invented on the typewriter, a la Dickens, which accounts for the fact that so much trickery occurs to the writer *after* he has presented his initial working situation. This accounts for their retrospective or revelatory quality,

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and for the techniques that Faulkner was forced to invent to accommodate a *specifically* associational way of composition. Thus the going-back-in time, so familiar to readers of his novels though less evident in the present collection, is as associationally inspired by Faulkner's preceding material as Proust's is, and similarly, depends upon copious elaboration to make its effect. One of the most striking examples of the manner in which Faulkner can elaborate a narrative whose actual structure is simple is the author's novel *As I Lay Dying*, which includes both the ingenious shifts in time and the ultimate in that dramatic disingenuousness already discussed. Here, for the first time in American fiction known to this reviewer, a story is told in the first person by six or seven different characters, each of whom casts a subjective light on the objective action of the story, which paradoxically is their own activity as assessed and expressed by themselves.

The reader need only think back to Henry James' happy discovery of the Third Person, through whom the fiction was seen and commented upon, to realize the radical contribution Faulkner has made to the art of *telling* the story, long or short. It would seem that these daring technical innovations are not only usable to many writers who will succeed Faulkner, but must at least be ingested by others who may wish to transcend them; it surely would seem folly to ignore them, even for the writer who criticizes the uses to which their creator put them. It is this latter which might be called the rub in Faulkner: his contribution to the fictional form, much like Eugene O'Neill's to theatre form, seems to transcend the "neurotic" need that inspired it. It also appears likely that the forms can be incorporated into the mainstream of our fiction without incorporating the restrictedly sensational matter of which they are the unique expression.

Despite Mr. Faulkner's genius for limitless associational invention, the present volume of short stories is once again an example of that extreme imbalance between the invention and its significance on which critics of the novels have commented. On the level of sheer narrative at least half of the 42 stories are striking *tours de force*; but when their fundamental meaning, or significance, is considered, they are, in this reviewer's opinion, severely limited to a plane of pure sensation, and spectacular situations are conceived as ends in themselves. In the hands of less pretentious (and less opulently gifted) fictionists, like Stevenson, Maugham, Conan Doyle, etc., the shocking adventure story conceived as end in itself is "legitimate" and satisfying entertainment. Faulkner's tales, however, are too pitched in emotion to be taken in quite the same frame of mind; their very tone, as well as the suggestively violent matter, pretends to an exalted emotion which is not honestly fufilled by the story itself. Though the very angels may be invoked (and often are), they are never seen in their spiritual capacity, but always on the plane of visual sensation, along with the grits; thus the gravest drama, in Faulkner's hands, is incorrigibly if stunningly melodramatized; and in the corresponding gap between the Dostoyevskian ambition and the more Dali-like accomplishment lies the major criticism.

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Waiting for the Apocalypse

DANIEL AARON

THE DAY OF THE LOCUST, by *Nathanael West*. New Directions. $1.50.

Now that Nathanael West's *Miss Lonelyhearts* has attained the status of a 'minor classic', he is not likely to be slighted by the literary historians and critics who until recently have pretty much ignored him. His last novel, however, is less well known. New Directions' reissue of *The Day of the Locust*, first published in 1939, should remove any doubts about West's perverse genius and extend his still limited audience.

Readers familiar with any of West's earlier writing will recognize in this Hollywood-Los Angeles extravaganza the tone and mannerisms which always distinguished his books, bizarre and ferocious, from the more popular 'proletarian' novels of the thirties. West apparently admired the left-wing propagandists who solemnly documented the decay of capitalist society, and he sympathised with their aims, too, but he was saved from being naive and doctrinaire by his compulsive irony, by his delight in the incongruous, and perhaps most of all by his profound disgust with life itself. These very qualities separated him from a generation who either preferred the exposures of the radical pamphleteers or the literature of escape. West's books never sold well although he had a small cult of admirers.

Unlike most of his contemporaries, West is not easy to place or to categorize. It is true that his obsession with the grotesque, his studies of people suddenly seized and ridden by private demons, suggest Sherwood Anderson; that the meticulous way in which he delineates the atrocious reminds us of Huysmans; and that there is something akin to a Chagall-like mysticism in his disciplined nightmares. But at the same time his vision of a foul and arid world is intensely personal and quite underivative, for he is a comic writer who can be droll if never unabashedly joyous, and he is as much impressed by the ludicrousness of life as he is by its horror.

Consider *The Day of the Locust*. At first glance it might strike one as simply another exposé of Hollywood, more frenetic and burlesqued, perhaps, than most, but exploiting the familiar vulnerable stereotypes. Tod Hackett, West's young painter and alter ego, comments again on the well-known landscape and observes the habits of the movie world which have been so critically and uncritically celebrated. But the reader soon discovers that this tale of Hollywood is neither a witty and superficial arraignment of the film colony or Southern California (Evelyn Waugh's *The Loved One*) nor a romantic evocation of Hollywood as epic (F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Last Tycoon*). Hollywood, West's fantastic "dream dump", is conceived rather as a symbol of despair and unfulfillment.

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West had originally planned to call his book, "The Cheated". The characters, both major and minor, are not only cheating one another by pretending to be what they are not, but even more significant for West, they have been swindled out of their expectations and illusions. Hollywood, moreover, is not an isolated piece of dreamland or a national joke; it is America carried to its logical conclusion. The tormented, hungry, violent people who end up at the edge of the western ocean and who finally riot in the eerie conclusion of the book are the products of middle-America, the degraded descendents of the Populists, with no further frontiers to conquer. They are the locusts, mindless and numberless, who, like their Biblical namesakes, have turned a once beautiful country into a desert; they are impelled by forces they can neither understand nor control. They may even be the instruments of God's wrath. West observes them humorously but also with wonder and fear as they scream imprecations in their 'New Thought' temples and swarm aimlessly through the streets waiting for the apocalypse.

The city is unreal where they wander, and the signs of death and sterility are everywhere. Nothing seems really alive in this gaudy paradise except the lizards. The people move jerkily down Vine street, itself a kind of enlarged movie studio, and the dream-like quality is enhanced by the architectural conglomeration—Mexican, Swiss, Tudor, Egyptian—and by the calculated disguises of the pedestrians. As West puts it,

> A great many of the people wore sports clothes which were not really sports clothes. Their sweaters, knickers, slacks, blue flannel jackets with brass buttons were fancy dress. The fat lady in the yachting cap was going shopping, not boating; the man in the Norfolk jacket and Tyrolean hat was returning, not from a mountain, but an insurance office; and the girl in slacks and sneaks with a bandanna around her head had just left a switchboard, not a tennis court.

West is charmed by the monstrous masquerade, and there are some fine comic episodes in *The Day of the Locust* which grow out of the incongruity of make-believe and reality. Thus when Tod Hackett visits the set where 'Waterloo' is being filmed, he observes that the battle is proceeding briskly. Since neither Wellington nor Napoleon are available, the assistants of the producer, Mr. Grotenstein, take over. "Things looked tough for the British and their allies" until one of the directors bolsters the allied center "with infantry from Brunswick, Welsh foot, Devon yeomanry and Hanoverian light horse." And then, luckily for the British, a man wearing a checked cap repeats Napoleon's classic blunder and orders General Milhaud's cuirassiers to capture Mont St. Jean before the property men have finished their preparation. The whole hill collapses, Napoleon's army is covered with painted cloth, and the insurance company must subsidize the defeat.

Yet the burlesque in *The Day of the Locust* (more subdued here than in

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his slapstick, *A Cool Million*, which preceded it) finally becomes nightmare, and we know that West is in deadly earnest. Kenneth Burke has remarked that "the grotesque is the cult of incongruity *without* laughter." Certainly the dominating tone of this book is not joyous in spite of its desperate humor. It seems likely that West's image of a tortured demented world grew out of a deep personal anguish and that in the dislocations of society he found the symbols of his private state. Because of his close identification with what he described, his cast of whores, paranoiacs, con-men, and sadists are never presented with the detachment which we expect from the true social castigators who lash out against moral aberration. There is nothing of Juvenal, or of Jonson or Swift or Smollet; nor is there any kindly spoofing. The principal female character, for instance, could properly be the subject for the social satirist: she is witless, if beautiful, and lives in an adolescent trance. But for West, who never presented women sympathetically, this platinum-haired witch with a moon-face and "sword-like legs", is more vicious and destructive than comic. "Her invitation," he writes, "wasn't to pleasure, but to struggle, hard and sharp, closer to murder than to love. If you threw yourself on her, it would be like throwing yourself from the parapet of a skyscraper. You would do it with a scream."

The apparent objectivity or realism of the book derives, I think, from the extreme clarity with which he projects his scenes of violence, a clarity observable in some surrealist paintings or in a story like Kafka's *The Penal Colony*. *The Day of the Locust*, starting off almost gaily, becomes very soon a series of sharply focused but disconnected episodes—the showing of an obscene film, a cock-fight in a garage, several formidable debauches, a crazy riot—which blend his private anxieties with public truths.

It is not really a satisfactory novel, because West never manages to fuse his image of the "dream dump" with the more revealing symbol of the cock-fight. Of all the events in the book, this is the most graphic and relentless and the one which makes clear West's preoccupation with his dippy heroine and the assorted flock of birds who flutter and peck around her. In fact West becomes so absorbed with Faye Greener that he never shows just what relation, if any, exists between her cavortings and the tribulations of Homer Simpson, the yokel from Iowa, in whose garage the cock-fight takes place. Homer, although a central figure, is nothing more than a botched re-working of Sherwood Anderson's grotesque in his story, *Hands*. He is intended, I suppose, to be the link between the frustrated Iowans and the raffish movie set, but no conscious idea or metaphor holds this book together. It only succeeds as a kind of baleful commentary on American life and an unhappy record of what Poe once described as "this unfathomable longing of the soul to vex itself."

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JAIME DE ANGULO, *by Tino Trova*

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